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In Memoriam.

OTIS NORCROSS.



In Memoriam.

OTIS NORCROSS.

BORN IN BOSTON NOVEMBER 2, 1811.

DIED IN BOSTON SEPTEMBER 5, 1882.

BOSTON:
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OTIS NORCROSS.



It is fitting that the evidences of the confidence reposed by his generation in one who has honorably filled public station, and faithfully administered private trusts, with the tokens of appreciation of his worth offered by those who have shared his labors and been guided by his judgment, should, when his life has been brought to an end, be gathered up, with the general expressions of regret at his departure, and preserved for a testimonial to his fidelity and virtues, a precious legacy to his descendants, and an incentive and inspiration to all who will profit by his example. In this spirit, and as an act of filial duty, the following pages have been prepared.

They contain the simple record of a life, not wholly uneventful, passed, for more than the allotted span, in the same community, by a many-sided man, who from beginning to end sustained its confidence and respect:—a man who was regarded as one of its most sagacious and upright citizens, and was honored with extensive trusts and positions of public duty, because those who knew him believed that his sense of personal responsibility would lead him to exercise a conscientious wisdom in administration:—a man whose death filled many, acquainted with him only by name, with a sense of per-

sonal bereavement in the loss of one who could ill be spared, because he could always be depended upon to advocate and enforce, as well as exemplify, the high standard of integrity and good government, which has been the honorable characteristic of the city in which he dwelt.

OTIS NORCROSS was born in Boston Nov. 2, 1811, and died in Boston, Sept. 5, 1882. The line of his descent can be traced unbroken beyond the earliest settlement of the country. Jeremiah, the first settler of whom there is record, came to this country from London in 1638, and first lived at Salem. As early as 1639 he became a land owner in Watertown, and removed there to settle about 1642. He was a large proprietor, owning a homestead of twenty-six acres and other lots of land. On the old maps of Watertown the land now occupied by the United States Arsenal, is laid down as part of his property. In 1649 he was one of the Selectmen of Watertown, and in the records is often mentioned as Mr. Norcross. He subsequently returned to England and died there in 1657.

His second son, Richard, was born in England in 1621, and died in 1709. He married for his first wife in 1650, Mary Brooks, and had a son, Richard, born 1660, who married, in 1695, for his second wife, Hannah Saunders, and had eleven children, of whom Peter was born at Weston, Mass., in 1710, and in 1742 married, for his first wife, Elizabeth Benjamin. Peter had a son Daniel, born in Mendon, Mass., in 1743, who married, in 1765, Abigail Chapin, and had nine children. His eighth son and child was Otis, born at Hopkinton, Mass., April 20, 1785, who married, January 8, 1809, Mary Cunningham, daughter of Eleazer and Mary Homer, (b. Apr. 21, 1790, d. Jan. 6, 1869,) and died Nov. 23, 1827.

The second child, and first son of this Otis and Mary, was OTIS, the subject of this sketch, born Nov. 2, 1811, at his father's house in Fleet Street, at the North End. When he was about six years of age, his father moved to the West End of the city, and his boyhood was passed there. After his father's death, his mother removed to Brighton, and he made his home at

Holland's Coffee House on Howard Street; after his marriage he lived in Blossom and McLean Streets until 1871, when he removed to 9 Commonwealth Avenue, his residence at the time of his death. At the early age of four he was sent to school to a Miss Davenport; in 1817 to Abel Whitney's school, at the corner of Staniford Street and Staniford Place, where he had for schoolmates, Wm. Perkins, Benjamin Callender, and others who afterwards became prominent citizens; here he remained until he entered the English High School, then at the corner of Derne and Temple Streets, but subsequently removed to Pinckney Street.

In March, 1826, at the age of fourteen, he left school, and commenced his apprenticeship with his father's firm, Otis Norcross & Co., which was about moving from Exchange to South Market Street, and, as was then the custom for the youngest apprentice, he opened the store alone, early in the morning, built the fires, and trimmed the lamps and lanterns for evening work, which in spring and fall was always kept up until nine, and often until ten or eleven o'clock.

His father died suddenly in the year 1827, but the name of the firm remained as before, and he continued in his apprenticeship with it, until he was of age, and in the year following was taken into it as a partner. In 1847 Mr. Eliphalet Jones retired, and Joseph Addison Norcross, a younger brother, entered the firm. By subsequent changes he had for partners, at different times, Messrs. Ichabod Howland, D. Webster Norcross, David W. Hitchcock and Jerome Jones, until in 1867 he himself retired from active business, "after passing," as he says in his private memoranda, "my entire business life of forty-one years, man and boy, in Store 23 and 24 South Market Street. The firm, including my father's time, had been in existence about eighty years, and notwithstanding the severe financial trials that intervened, it has been the good fortune of the partners to avoid disaster, and close up the affairs of the firm satisfactorily to all concerned."

His business talent, care for detail, and the general confidence felt in his sterling honesty and fidelity, caused him to be selected as executor of many

wills, and trustee of various estates, while his services were valued and sought for in the direction of corporations of established standing, as well as those controlling large amounts of property.

He was one of the original members and for three years a Vice President of the Boston Board of Trade, for six years a Trustee of Mount Auburn Cemetery; from 1870 to his death a Director, (from 1874-1879 President) of the New England Trust Company, and for three years (1879 to his death) a Vice-President of the Massachusetts Hospital Life Insurance Company.

He was a generous and frequent contributor to many of the organized charitable institutions of the city, and an active manager of not a few. Beside being a trustee of the City Hospital, he was a member of the corporation of the Boston Lying-in Hospital; from 1863 a director for the Home for Aged Men, and at the time of his death its President; from 1869 a manager of the Old Ladies' Home, and a member of its finance committee. In 1861 he was elected a trustee of the Franklin Savings Bank, and a member of the finance committee, remaining such until 1881. In 1870 he was chosen a trustee of the Boston Young Men's Christian Union, and Treasurer of its Permanent Fund, remaining so until his death.

Whenever aid was to be given to the suffering in other cities, his counsel was sought, and his untiring energies were called into service. In 1871 he was one of the executive committee of ten of the citizens of Boston for the relief of the sufferers by the great fire of Chicago; and in 1872, while the fire in Boston was yet raging, he went to the Mayor's office to consult upon what should be done to relieve and aid the sufferers, was chosen treasurer of the committee of relief, and one of the executive and finance committee.

He was connected with many social organizations, being an original member of the Union Club, a life member of the Boston Natural History Society, the Institute of Technology, [in 1876 one of its Corporation,] the New England Historic, Genealogical Society, and of the English High School Association.

In 1868 he was chosen director of the Bunker Hill Monument Association; in 1877 became a life member of the Mercantile Library Association; in 1879 a member of the Archaeological Institute of America; in 1880 a Trustee of the Boston Memorial Society; in 1880 a member of the Boston Antiquarian Club, which in 1881 was merged in the Bostonian Society.

He was always interested in whatever contributed to the attractiveness of the city. In 1866 he was a member of the committee to procure the statue of Edward Everett; in 1868 of the committee to procure a marble statue of Gov. John Albion Andrew for the State House; in 1874 of the committees on a memorial to Prof. Louis Agassiz, and to decide on the statue of Charles Sumner.

In 1870 he was one of the persons named in the Act of Incorporation of the Museum of Fine Arts, was elected a trustee and member of the Building Committee, in 1877 made a member of the executive committee, and at the time of his death was President *pro tempore*.

He held his first public office in 1856, when he was chosen a director of the House of Industry at South Boston. He continued to hold the position until the Board of Directors was merged in that of Directors for Public Institutions. In 1860 he was a member of the School Committee for Ward 5. December, 1861, he was chosen one of the Board of Aldermen for the ensuing year, and by re-elections held the office during 1863-4, being in 1864 Chairman of the Board.

When the City Hospital was organized, he was elected a trustee, representing the Board of Aldermen, and after he retired from that Board, was in 1865 elected a trustee at large, and during the years 1864-5-6 was President of the trustees.

In 1865 he was chosen Treasurer of the Overseers of the Poor of Boston, and held the office until 1877. In this position he had the management of the Sears Charity Fund and the Fifty Associates' Charity Fund, and in January, 1870, received from Mr. Sears a silver salver, on which was inscribed: "Presented to the Hon. OTIS NORCROSS, Treasurer of the Fifty Associates' Charity and the Searston Charter House, in evidence of his

faithful, skillful and zealous management of said Trust Funds committed to the care of the Overseers of the Poor of the City of Boston, and in testimony of the grateful acknowledgment of their Donor."

In 1865 he was elected by the City Council a member at large of the Water Board, and chosen its President, an office which he resigned on being elected Mayor, two years later. During his term of office the construction of the Chestnut Hill Reservoir was decided upon, and the land for it purchased. The same year he was a Commissioner on laying out the streets of South Boston. The fee paid him for his services he gave to the Children's Mission.

In 1867 he was Mayor of Boston. The history of his official acts will be found in the City Records, and in a portion of the chapter of the Memorial History of Boston, entitled "Boston under the Mayors," which has been transferred by permission to these pages. While he was Mayor, the negotiations for the annexation of Roxbury were completed; he welcomed President Johnson and General Sheridan as guests of the city; vetoed an order of the City Council for building an Insane Hospital at Winthrop; and was a member of a Commission appointed by Congress, which selected a site for the new Post Office. His whole salary as Mayor he gave to the Home for Aged Men, the City Hospital, the Norcross, Phillips, and Farm Schools. With conscious pride he says: "During all my connection with City Government from 1862 to 1868, I never received a dollar to my own use directly or indirectly. I never sold the city a dollar's worth of merchandise or made a contract with the city of any kind, directly or indirectly. I never put a friend or relation into office of any kind."

The School Committee paid him a well deserved compliment by giving his name to the new school house erected at the corner of D and Fifth Streets, South Boston, while he was Mayor, and he showed his appreciation of it by giving to the school a clock for the Hall, a gift of books, a portrait of himself, and leaving to it a legacy in his will.

In 1873 he was a member of a Commission consisting, beside himself, of Judges B. R. Curtis and George T. Bigelow, Hon. Charles G. Greene and

Hon. Charles Allen on the revision of the City Charter of Boston, which reported in 1875 a new charter, which failed, however, to receive the approval of the City Government. The numerous changes in the Government of Boston since the rejection of this Charter have nearly all been in the direction of its recommendations.

Not only his native city, but the Commonwealth claimed and had his service. In 1863 he was appointed by Gov. Andrew a member of the Board of State Charities, and was for a time its Chairman, resigning in 1864. In 1869 he was elected a member of the Executive Council from the Suffolk District. In 1869 he was appointed by the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, Chairman of the Commissioners for laying out Salem Turnpike as a public highway; and in 1870 a Commissioner to assess damages for laying out the Brookline and Cambridge Bridge as a highway.

In 1870, by the Supreme Courts of Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New York, he was appointed Receiver of the Boston, Hartford and Erie Railroad, but declined. He also declined the positions of Harbor Commissioner, State Director of the Boston, Hartford and Erie Railroad, and Inspector of the State Prison, tendered at different times, by the Governor and Council.

December 9, 1835, Mr. Norcross was married by the Rev. Samuel Barrett, of the Twelfth Congregational Church, to Lucy Ann, daughter of George Lane of Boston. There were eight children by this marriage, of whom four died in infancy, and one, Addison, at the age of 23, on the 18th October, 1873; a daughter, Laura, and two sons, Otis (Harv. Coll. 1870), and Grenville Howland (Harv. Coll. 1875), with their mother, survive.

In his religious connections Mr. Norcross was a Unitarian. His father was an original proprietor in the Twelfth Congregational Church, and for many years a member of the Standing Committee. In that Church he, and all his brothers and sisters but one, were christened. In 1849 he himself became one of the Standing Committee of the Church, and when it was dissolved in 1861, was one of the Committee to close up its affairs and

dispose of its property. Subsequently he connected himself with the West Church, and for nearly twenty years was a regular and constant attendant upon its services.

He was a member of the American Unitarian Association, was in 1868 elected on its Executive Committee, and in 1870 one of its Vice Presidents, but declined both offices. When the Unitarian Club was formed, a few months before his death, he was one of its earliest members.

For most of his life Mr. Norcross enjoyed robust physical health, and the demands of his extensive business and his various trusts seemed to make no exhausting drain upon his vigor. In 1853 he had his first serious illness, when he was confined to his house for several months with a severe attack of rheumatic fever. In 1860, for rest and relaxation, he made a trip of some months' duration to Europe. About two years before his death, he was attacked with severe illness, and from that time his health was uncertain, and his condition more or less precarious. His last sickness was of brief duration. He returned home in July from a visit to Saratoga quite unwell; became better, and for a few days was about the streets, was then attacked with disease of the heart, and died after about a week's confinement to the house.

H. F. J.





THE FUNERAL.



THE funeral services over the remains of Mr. Norcross were held at his residence, No. 9 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, on Friday, September 8th, 1882, at noon, in the presence of a large number of relatives, personal friends and former business associates.

The Rev. Cyrus A. Bartol, D. D., minister of the West Church, conducted the services, which began with the singing of Mrs. Barbauld's hymn :—

How blest the righteous when he dies !
When sinks a weary soul to rest,
How mildly beam the closing eyes,
How gently heaves the expiring breast !

So fades a summer cloud away,
So sinks the gale when storms are o'er,
So gently shuts the eye of day,
So dies a wave along the shore.

A holy quiet reigns around—
 A calm which life nor death destroys;
 Nothing disturbs that peace profound
 Which his unfettered soul enjoys.

Farewell, conflicting hopes and fears,
 Where lights and shades alternate dwell;
 How bright the unchanging morn appears!
 Farewell, inconstant world, farewell.

Life's duty done, as sinks the day,
 Light from its load the spirit flies:
 While heaven and earth combine to say,
 "How blest the righteous when he dies!"

Dr. Bartol then said:—

My friends: In this bereaved house, and in this great sympathetic company, it may have occurred to you, as it has to me, while these sweet strains of the so familiar hymn have been rising, that nothing is altogether sad which we can sing about. Faith sings, love sings, hope sings, joy sings; and if sorrow can sing, it is of that sort Jesus spoke of to His disciples—that shall be converted into joy. If there be any occasion when we are not heard for our much speaking, it is such an occasion as this; and I sometimes think it were much better that our tears, our thoughts, our memories, our dear associations with the departed friend should be the funeral service, while we, after silent communion and prayer, take what is left of mortality and carry it out silently and safely to mingle with the mother earth, while the spirit goes silently to its Father, God. But Nature, which teaches us to be still, also moves us in some way at least to voice our feeling, and it falls to me to voice your feeling and my own to-day. Certainly so much as this—to recite some of those passages long ago written and spoken very widely in the world—remembered and recited, because by the wit of man they cannot be

improved. All flesh, yea all that which we wear still for our garments, that which our brother has laid aside, all of it is grass, and all the goodliness of it is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, and the flower in the sun-scorched, drought-stricken fields yonder falleth away, but the Word of the Lord endureth forever. Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl broken, or the pitcher broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern; then shall the dust return to earth as it was, and that in us all which is neither cord, nor wheel, nor pitcher, nor bowl, shall return unto God who gave it. I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labors. I, said Jesus, am the resurrection, the rising, and the life. And the Lamb which is in the midst of them shall feed them: He shall lead them by living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

But I cannot confine myself at this time and in this house to the repeating of these old and blessed formulas of that Christian faith which we share together and our dear brother shared with us all. I should fall short of the speechless emotion in the heart of every-one present; nay, I should fall short of my own friendly and ministerial duty if I did not try in a word, a passing word, to show what manner of man this is whose cold relics lie in the coffin there.

This presence of men and women who have known and loved him many a long year is tribute and testimony enough. I shall but express that sentiment common to you all, when I say simply, he was a good, he was a simple, he was a sincere, he was a noble, he was a loyal man. He was a great and good officer in all the offices he held; and in the chief office in this city, of Mayor, which he held for a year, his example of uncompromising, incorruptible integrity challenges comparison with the behavior of any man, from the foundation of Boston, who ever sat in that chair. He reminded me, perhaps others, of the elder Quincy, who also honored and was honored with that principal place in our good city of Boston. Even in his upright port, in the outward expression of his real uprightness of conduct, he, I think, would

have been chosen and picked out of a crowd, as the Mayor of the city, by that bearing and that walk which was part of his nature and outward form. Too short a time for the best interests of Boston, allow me to say it, he held that place of such vital concern to any community. Considering the peculiar situation and exposure of the American cities,—all especially of larger kind in population and in material interests,—I think we shall agree that no continuance of that term of office for him would have been other than a benediction to this town.

But I am not to dwell on his character at this time. I shall have another opportunity, which my conscience will prompt me to improve. Nor shall I speak of the equal fidelity which he manifested in all the offices that he held. He was no aspirant to political favor. His demeanor in private and in philanthropic, commercial and charitable societies, shone equally conspicuous with all the traits of character which he displayed in public; no elevation could have spoiled or sophisticated him, the ingenuous, faithful man. No gift in the hands of Massachusetts, or the Massachusetts Legislature, had it been in him to seek promotion, as many seek it, would have exceeded the measure of his ability.

In the ripeness, in the fullness of his faculties and affections, he has gone—it is a beautiful word, *passed*, not stopped, passed on, passed up, to higher trusts. We, my friends, of this numerous company, have, however, assembled with scarcely any other purpose or feeling than to mingle our tears and our prayers with those of the afflicted family. It is a domestic occasion, and private takes precedence even of public grief. It is the father, and husband, and brother, and kinsman, and near and dear friend, whose visible presence we miss. In one of the last conversations I had with him in his chamber above, although I saw him often afterwards when he had recovered in a measure his health, I happened to meet his dear friend, and that trusted and disinterested officer of Boston, the solicitor and attorney, Mr. Healy, who seemed in perfect health and spoke almost as if he were taking leave of him. He went first; Mr. Norcross has followed. We shall all

follow. Why do we mourn as if we were going to stay so very long time? Let us rejoice for the risen, the translated, the ascended, and let us rise in thought and love, even now, after them. Let us pray:—

Oh God, to whom we would say little, from whom we would hear much, listening inwardly, we pray not for what Thou hast given us so warm and abundant already; we pray not for the human love with which our poor mortal frame already burns, trembles and crumbles: we pray for faith. This wife, widow, woman, these sons, this daughter, brother and sisters, kinsmen, and kinswomen and friends—we all pray for faith—faith to believe that this which we see cold and still on the bier is not all that there is of man, made in the image of God; is not all there is of this man, bearing so signal marks of the image of God, of love and truth, in which we are made.

Give the faith, give the faith, and let it burn and shine in us, scattering all clouds of fear and doubt and trouble. Fill Thy handmaid's heart with it, so that there shall be no room left for regret or sorrow. Fill these children's hearts with it, so that they shall rejoice.

Give these near and dear kindred and friends grace to thank Thee for the gift of such a man to be their husband, their father, their brother, their friend. Give this faith to us all in whatever private or public or business relations we may have been connected with the departed; and in the same universal, religious, unsectarian faith which he exercised, wilt Thou sanctify Thy providence to all who knew him, and to those, who he said, served him faithfully, in whatever humble way, in his house, at his board, on his pillow, over his hearse. This is our prayer. Oh God! hear it and answer it to this house, to this company, to this community, to this city, to this land. We offer it in the dear name and memory of Him, our Brother, who has won for Himself the title of Thy dear Son in the world—even Jesus Christ. Amen.

After the singing of "Rest, Spirit, Rest," the benediction was pronounced by Dr. Bartol. The remains were borne to the hearse by Frederick W. Lincoln, Samuel C. Cobb, Charles Faulkner, Nathaniel J. Bradlee, Jerome

Jones, William H. Baldwin, W. Rowland Norcross and James Longley, and taken to Mount Auburn, where they were committed to their place of rest with the following prayer by the Rev. Henry Fitch Jenks:

Our Father which art in heaven ; Hallowed be Thy name ; Thy kingdom come ; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

We give Thee hearty thanks for the good examples of Thy servants who have kept the faith, and finished their course, and entered upon their rest. Especially do we bless Thee for the life which has now been brought to its earthly close, with its rich memories of useful service.

May Thy peace descend into the hearts of these mourning friends, and as they commit to the earth that which is of the earth earthy, may they do so with the assurance that the spirit is with God who gave it ; and in the light of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, by which life and immortality have been revealed, may they feel that he whom they have loved is not here but has risen to receive his reward.

Go with us back to the duties of our lives, and help us so to perform them that we may be faithful as he was ; and when the summons comes for us to pass hence, may we hear the welcome, Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord.

Hear our prayer, forgive our sins, and now and ever grant us Thy benediction, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The peace of God that passeth understanding, keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God ; and may He who brought from the dead the Great Shepherd of the sheep, comfort, protect, and sustain us, now and ever. Amen.

CIVIC AND PATRIOTIC WORTH IN BOSTON.

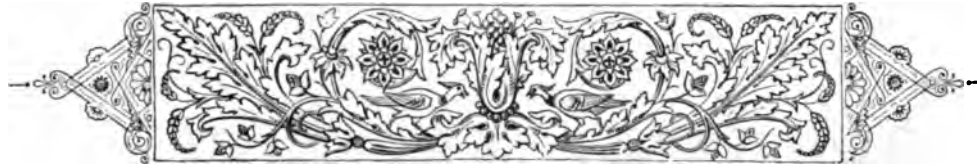
SERMON

PREACHED BY

REV. CYRUS A. BARTOL, D. D.

IN THE WEST CHURCH, BOSTON.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1882.



SERMON.

HE THAT IS FAITHFUL IN A VERY LITTLE IS FAITHFUL ALSO IN MUCH.—LUKE 16: 10.



OUR text is made for us to-day, as in the Word of the Master, so in the life of a parishioner, who illustrated, if anybody on earth has done it, the principle that faithfulness in little things does not disqualify, but fits and prepares for great trusts; and on this point I propose to dwell, inasmuch as I have heard but one objection to the character and course of OTIS NORCROSS, namely, that he was too particular, and lacked the worldly prudence of passing by faults and omissions, personal and official, of small consequence, thereby making political enemies,—indeed losing his place and forfeiting the whole influence for good he might else have exerted in our municipal affairs.

As this man was born in Boston more than seventy years ago, in Fleet Street, so called, and as he loved his parent-town to the day of his death, and was chosen once at least to her chief chair, out of which

some thought he was cheated in the ballot after his second nomination, let us consider the quality in him which was in this city at once his conspicuous merit and the rock on which his success and civil promotion are supposed to have split.

Note, then, not the insignificance but importance of little things in our government and civilization, especially in the administration of every public office and post. How many proverbs condense the wisdom of nations and mankind to give us this hint! "Many a mickle makes a muckle," "Take care of the pennies and the pounds will take care of themselves," "In for a mill, in for a million," "A stitch in time saves nine;" and, though we have another of saving by the spigot and losing by the bunghole, I believe those who let the cask run at the smaller aperture are the only ones apt also and likely to neglect the larger.

After feeding thousands miraculously, Christ bade His followers gather up the fragments; and what is the human race but one great fragment society? Every community, the whole wide-peopled world depends on daily earnings and were on the edge of starvation,—yes, the wealth and production of the planet would disappear like a rain-drop or snow-flake in the stream in a twelve-month—but for the work and saving of every year; and as, tempted by ample territory and opportunity, we are held by statisticians to be the most wasteful country on the globe, and have for generations spent enough to support a second republic or empire, while the prospect looms on us of smaller interest on capital and a closer approach of wages to the bare means of subsistence, so that we, like England and Germany, shall have soon to contrive more carefully how to keep our heads above water, it is timely to commend and emphasize this trait of economy in our friend's and fellow citizen's career.

He, let it be confessed, did call his subordinates, through the whole extent of his sphere and responsibility, to a strict account, all bills of expense

-- in a municipality being subject for approval or objection to the Mayor's eye ; and Mr. Norcross was no nominal officer, but happened to have a conscience that could not let him rest on any delinquency, or suffer malfeasance to be overlooked or go unpunished without censure, by his default. He examined every little thing. He was not the figure-head, but pilot of the ship. It is a hackneyed quotation that an honest man is the noblest work of God ; but it is easy and not infrequent to be honest in the common-place sense of not owing a dollar and paying our personal debts. I hope we all have the passive or enforced honesty of wiping off our score at the grocery or dry goods store and paying our fare to the conductor on the car. We do not steal a purse or a ride. But active honesty, the honesty that requires complete fidelity in our associates, in any enterprise, undertaking or position for the general good, is a different thing. Truly it is so rare and hard as to be regarded as impracticable and almost unknown ; and this was the honesty of Mr. Norcross, added to a private rectitude, and raised to the highest power, while it descended to the lowest matter, like an elephant's trunk, that can twist off a tree or pick up a pin.

It was this both mighty and minute righteousness that, well-called honorable, he both demanded and displayed. Was there a dinner at a hotel, trip to inspect the water-works, visit to some institution of State charity, school of discipline or reform, junketing excursion down the harbor, entertainment of a delegation from afar, or official visit from Boston, on some great occasion, of delegates to be elsewhere entertained ? He would fix his eye on the expense, and not despise some estimate of and reflection on such things as extravagant carriage-hire, plenteous wine and cigars ; and perhaps he would send for the person through or by whom the over-charge had occurred, carrying, so he was reproached, the habits of his old business into the departments of a city, and expecting to manage Boston as he had been used to settle at his counter, and to handle delicate and costly wares in which he had formerly dealt. So he encountered difficulty and raised up critics and foes, and came to be defeated by vindictive votes of those to whom in their

excess or laxity he had given offence. A sore does not like a probe. Deeds of darkness do not love light let in and a prying eye. Dishonest people hate honesty energetic and applied, and profuse agents are not pleased to have their superiors gaze at what on the table they have carelessly spilled. So, not wishing to invite disfavor and defeat for candidates of his side in this land where the majority-vote is our palladium and image that fell down from Jupiter, many a high official recoils from the practice of investigation, which the man I speak of judged that his oath, as indeed his habit and nature, so eminently sincere and moral, compelled him to employ.

His integrity was his downfall,—real rising only seeming descent ; he was dismissed for his worth, though the returns of the polls were suggestive of repeaters. He was wounded, cut to the heart because he had been loyal and true ; he was told,—Be our officer no longer, for the reason that his duties had been so punctiliously performed. The Athenian citizen said he wrote on his shell, which was his vote, to ostracise Aristides because he hated to hear him so continually called just. There were citizens in Boston who felt just so about Mr. Norcross. Nor is it any classic pedantry to add that he, like the Roman Coriolanus, could not go round to solicit for himself the people's "sweet voices." It was the very charge brought against Edmund Burke, that he had applied the general principles of justice too stringently and carried them too far,—an accusation which, he declares to the electors of Bristol, would be his consolation in sickness and sorrow and every extremity. When we bear in mind that Mr. Norcross accepted and industriously attended to more numerous and serious public trusts than perhaps any other man of our time, we may trust he had under all the carping, like comfort abundantly.

This is the record to be made, very solemn and instructive to read. Carry the methods of a correct and high-minded business in every trivial circumstance into politics and lofty seats? Yes, I answer, without abatement of a tittle, a cipher, or a jot. What is the disease our great cities and our

continental land are afflicted with and in danger to die of, but the contrary procedure of a prodigal and irresponsible style? Have we forgotten Mr. Tweed and New York? Are we blind to the rings, like anaconda-coils, that threaten to stifle the life or consume the thrift of every populous and debt-plastered metropolis or town? Shall we learn nothing from the Philadelphia poor-house, where funds were so recently sequestered by its fiduciaries and even the copper roof of the building torn off to be sold? Are Babcock and Belknap and their kind obsolete? What is the spectacle before our eyes but of star-route contractors, worse than mail-robbers, in their enormous peculations, which it costs many hundred thousand dollars to indict and partially convict, defended and complimented as saints by all the ability and adroitness the American bar can afford; and the very tears of a court-room audience polluted by the pathos which counsel pump up to infuse into their argument of the case!

Bribes to the jury? What then are the lawyers' vast payments and retaining-fees? Rewards, money-compensations that amount to fortunes, for endeavors to cover up transgressions and clear or screen speculators as sly and transparent in their misdemeanors as ever shamed the light by which they were shone upon! Attack Moses and acquit Dorsey and Brady will you, my friend? It is a monstrous disproportion, immorality and absurdity; and where and how did the gigantic iniquity begin? This is the inquiry of my text and my theme. Like the upas-tree it did not start into existence in an hour, but it grew. It did not come Minerva-like on a sudden from the brain of Jove, but struck root little by little and its boughs rose and spread, till the wicked flourished like a green bay-tree. The plunderer at last was a pilferer at first. He commenced with a felonious dollar and ended with a million! Remember the Lord's word: He that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. How the little becomes verily large, in the germ of plague or fever, small pox, Asiatic cholera,—in a spark of fire that lays Boston low and burns a hundred millions of property to ashes, and in a theft which embezzles safely a few cents and goes on to embarrass an exchequer!

There is a good deal in the treasury of a city, still more in that of the United States. Uncle Sam after impoverishment of war is rich again. Why not put in one's hand and help one's-self from such a heap of notes and bonds and gold? He won't miss it, and nobody will mind. We,—the pickers and stealers—can get pleaders; and perhaps the Republican party, we owe our appointment to, will hold over us its broad shield. Such is the immense result from a small invisible source, as tiny seeds, like downy feathers or small as steel filings, tower into trees like the mustard seed in the parable, and birds of an unclean sort lodge in the branches thereof. Whence all the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy, but from some single unseen individual spore?

O, gentlemen in office, we all feel it if you are extravagant! If the funds are wasted or robbed, the real estate and every poor man must be over-taxed. What is put in at one comes out always at the other end! Therefore, I say, approve, applaud, hold in everlasting respect on these shores such as, like Mr. Norcross the economist, oppose profuseness and all the beginnings of iniquity.

Would I could impress on you the importance of what are counted little things, for evil or good. How dearly nature loves the least mite or motion in electricity, magnetism, atomic transmission of a letter or sound for hundreds and thousands of miles, on what a bridge of invisible piers through the telegraphic and telephonic wire, as well as in all her germinations from the granite that crumbles into sand and soil, in the cloud formations and the small dust in her huge balance of the land and sea! We must imitate and live close to nature, or be neither wise nor good. Take away an atom and the whole would go.

Nor let it be said there is aught stingy or mean in this frugality of God or man. Do you find that the spendthrift is the generous person, to be relied on for charity and resorted to for a contribution? Nay, the worst of misers

is the heedless and selfish consumer. Let Mr. Norcross meet such an accusation with his ample, constant and life-long bounty to such as were in need, and with the judicious and liberal benefactions provided in his will. Reckoning what he did while alive and bequeathed, after Mr. Eaton's splendid gift of eighty thousand dollars, both members of this church, he was among the largest endowers of the Young Men's Christian Union, which he so cordially served. The many published legacies of Mr. Norcross are but the continuation and seal of the habitual kindness of this singularly thoughtful and practical man, so close to observe and scrutinize, so free and handsome to bestow.

'Tis all the philosophy of little things. Wherefore could he be liberal, but because he had been frugal? What poverty or penury like that from prodigality! A leak in a ship or hole in a dam is so little as not to be suspected, seen or found, till the sea overwhelms or the lake becomes a torrent, at some Mill River, to sweep away. Does not the web ravel out at one loose thread? The telescope is a large instrument and unveils the starry heavens; but the little spectroscope discloses the constitution of the sun, and the microscope lays bare the secrets of vegetable and animal life in the infinitesimal bits of brick and cells with which all the vital organs are built up. From disregard not of the big but the little come deficits, defalcation and destruction. Let the Coast Survey have a false base line by an inch, and the reefs are misplaced and vessels cast away. What is the mischief in our finance, and cause of failure and crime? Inspectors that do not inspect, examiners that never examine, auditors that do not audit, and directors that do not direct, as one of them lately told me he had nothing to do with the liability of the corporation he had been chosen by; boards of committees that do not move, more than the lumber that furnishes their suggestive name. Of such Mr. Norcross did not furnish the type, but an example quite the contrary. His beacon of warning stood lighted, firm and unquenched by all the stormy surge.

Little things! A canker-worm, potato-bug, grasshopper, army-locust, is little: but, from old Egypt, which the English have taken, to the far West, it is capable of awful ravage and harm. The crew of Columbus and that of the Mayflower was little and of import very great. The census of Boston was comparatively small when I first knew it just fifty years ago, but the city was already great with the Pilgrim and Puritan spirit; and here in Mr. Norcross was a puritan and pilgrim, clean, temperate, upright as ever lived; one who held the city dear, and had well-defined and noble ideas wherein its glory consists; never was soured towards it or alienated from it because he missed the plurality of its choice and was a martyr to his honor; but cherished and served in many capacities the spot of his nativity as long as he breathed. "A city set on an hill cannot be hid." If the tri-mountain city shall be a model to her sisters, it will be due in good measure to him and his peers. They are the salt, but for which it would rot.

Mr. Norcross was of a sweet and gentle temper, but had not much suavity for malefactors. His manner was resolute, his face flint against iniquity. By ignorant votes preponderating he was alarmed; and in the menace of civil convulsion, at the stale-mate of the election between Tilden and Hayes, his hope for the Republic for a moment fell. But the cheerfulness of a sound moral sense and a patriotic heart never left his open and magnanimous look. He was by temperament, though not sombre, yet sober and grave. Was he over-particular? No,—none can be so! He was rather thorough in all his ways. Did he notice the operation of things too sharply? No,—we may wink at error and infirmity, but cannot and ought not to shut our eyes on sin. Others might differ with him in judgment, but I never heard anybody say he was not a true and good and earnest man.

Nor did his accuracy dwarf his capacity. He had a large mental horizon, as I found to my joy, when, for my own freedom of thinking, I incurred some theological disrepute even in the house of my friends. He was in

politics conservative, a Webster-Whig, but in religion more of a radical than a traditional faith. A destructive nihilist or iconoclast he was not. He did not break the idols, but moved them out of the way, as useless furniture is put in a garret or loft. He was utterly unsectarian; yet called himself a Christian Unitarian instead of a Unitarian Christian, not being a Trinitarian at all. In his conception on all subjects Mr. Norcross was clear; and his moral sense was like crystal, and pointed as the needle to the pole. He had no signal ability for forging a speech, which is almost like forging a note; but could express efficiently his views on any real matter, and I fancy it were well for the country if the ratio of intelligent business men like him, as compared with talkers and lawyers, in Congress and Legislature, were increased.

He detected at once what in any scheme, presented for his judgment, was unsound or unjust. When an appropriation from the city-treasury had been made for a charitable institution, he objected to and stopped it, although he himself was one of the managers of the concern. Whatever place he held, he was eminently useful in; as Alderman, Mayor, School-Committee man, in the House of Industry, on the Board of Trade, the Water-Board, Soldiers' Fund, State-Charities, Home for Aged Men or Women, Recruiting Offices, Mount Auburn Cemetery, Natural History Society, City-Hospital, Governor's Council, Museum of Fine Arts, Young Men's Christian Union, and a score beside. A divine obligation for human benefit was his law. He wrote it down for his maxim: "True manhood can find no foundation upon the shifting quicksands of popular opinion." This too from Shakespeare:

This above all,—to thine own self be true
And it must follow as the night the day
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

It was not strange that he manifested at all times, under trial and opposition, and most beautifully as I can testify, and his household knows, in

sickness, pain and approaching death, a perfect, even wonderful composure and peace. Whenever I went to cheer him in the long period of sickness and debility, from which he seemed partially to rally for a season, I received the comfort I meant to impart, and found for myself the lesson which, if there be need, it is the business of my profession to convey. Sick beds, mourning chambers, dying pillows, funeral rites, still more, doubting and discouraged hearts, draw heavily on the strength and spirit of the clergyman strongest in bodily frame and most assured in the anchorage of his faith and the bright dawning of an immortal hope. It is therefore a relief and peculiar pleasure when the very object of sympathy communicates to the minister more than it receives. I desire to say that, with Mr. Norcross, whatever load of pain or disappointment he had to bear, I was never exhausted, but only refreshed. He made no demand. The exact man was, in such circumstances, unexact-ing. He only wanted to converse and exchange views in mutual help and good will.

But, be it frankly owned, Mr. Norcross was a particular man, if that be a fault. On decaying wood he did not use a smoothing plane. He was particular when he went to the City Hospital to see, as he said, that all was "kept clean and no dust swept into the corners." How, then, but by sleepless and extreme particularity can the management of the largest scheme or corporation, mill, factory, railway, become either prosperous or just? Is it safe to leave any loop down in your house or firm? May the cashier as well put in his column five or four and nine-tenths when the right figure is four? I have known one in a Savings Bank hunt a day for a missing cent on his books. Shall this shop or human ant-hill of a city be less watchfully attended to and arranged? No: so at least Mr. Norcross thought. Who was this man, deemed more nice than wise? One that gave away in charity as one item his entire five thousand dollar salary, as he was always giving money or advice. I think the man was entitled to secure the city's property, who expended, almost lavished on good objects his own. Yet he would not bestow by dictation or for show.

In this country are no classes ; a class here is an impertinence. We have and we are the people, from whose great middle rank such men as Mr. Norcross spring, to subsist and ascend by their own wit and work, and to be the hope of the land, self-lifted and mainly self-taught, supplying most and best of our rulers, from governors of States and heads of departments to the presidential chair,—Washington, the surveyor, Lincoln, the rail-splitter, and Grant, the errand-boy. The people we may trust. Under God we lean on nothing else ; not on a Democratic or Republican party, but on the whole. We run two risks, the first in our universal suffrage, unless ignorance be over-ruled by intelligence, and moral weight prevail more than brute numbers ; and secondly, in the easy defence and deliverance of great criminals from due and condign doom. How weakly we Americans pardon and pardon out ! But forgiveness ceases to be a virtue when it causes villainy to have virtue for a prey.

We raise annually hundreds of millions of bushels of corn and wheat, and breed monsters too, not a valuable crop. We try those whom we indict by a jury sworn to have formed no opinion on the merits of the case ; that is, to have applied to it no conscience or sense, as if they had had none to apply ! We have lawyers for defendants, too many of whom use arguments that have no weight to their own minds ; and are tempted, in their zeal for their clients, to act hypocritical emotion in court, like actors on the stage. How legal rights stretch like India-rubber bands ! But the law is condemned when the transgressor escapes penalty and goes scot free. Against perils and evils so great a moral and religious as well as intellectual education is our only guard ; and Otis Norcross is a pattern of the sort of character which for our rescue we must cultivate in our children, by maintaining it in ourselves and in the social frame. We are in debt, for guidance and succor, to the professions, medicine, divinity, and law. But, without training of the immense fifty million outside and outlying mass, we cannot be saved. Mr. Norcross was prepared for no profession ; yet how few of the graduates of our colleges and professional schools rise to an influence so beneficently

great! A university is a net or sieve to separate the chaff from the wheat or gather both bad and good, one to keep, the other to throw away. Knowledge or language is vain, lacking wisdom and love. How the judicial bench is drawn into the disputes of the bar, and becomes a third party with the quarreling counsel in the strife of tongues!

Although Mr. Norcross has been out of business, in the trading sense, for the last fifteen years, it is well to note that his commercial character had the same mark of precision or equity with all his life. He was not a speculator. His fortune came of sound and sure investments. A full weight and balance is the Lord's; and it was his; "He was as quick," says his partner, now head of the firm, "to correct in the bill the least overplus in his favor as a shortage in the payment. He was the best man I ever knew in my life." He was of the merchants to whom the Lawrences and Appletons and hundreds besides have given so fine a name.

Not to pronounce a panegyric on our common friend, do I utter this discourse. His reputation needs not my praise. If history is morality teaching by example, the best sermon from the pulpit is the portrait of a good man, a painting that lives and lasts forever. Let us remember, it is no trick, technical skill, or even-cut accomplishment which can make our life a blessing, wanting that principle of devotion to God and our kind before which, whenever we see it, we bend and bow, as at the shrine and shekinah of the Most High; and it is apparent in the man of business, man of affairs, as plainly as in any learned barrister, healing doctor, church votary, or gowned priest. My or anybody's speech of it is but the electric spark, whose element, vast and invisible, flows through and quickens the world.

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
CITY COUNCIL OF BOSTON,
SEPTEMBER 7, 1882.



PROCEEDINGS.



SPECIAL meetings of both branches of the City Council were held on the morning of Thursday, September 7th, 1882, upon the call of the Mayor, Hon. SAMUEL A. GREEN, to take action upon the death of Ex-Mayor OTIS NORCROSS. The Common Council met at eleven o'clock, CHARLES E. PRATT, President, in the chair. The President read the following:—

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT.

To the Honorable the City Council.

It becomes my sad duty to inform you of the death, at his residence, on Tuesday evening, September Fifth, of the Honorable Otis Norcross, formerly the Mayor of Boston, and a citizen whose three-score years and ten have much inured to her pride and welfare. I suggest that such action as may seem just and fitting in the premises be taken by your body.

SAMUEL A. GREEN, *Mayor.*

September 6th, 1882.

The President.—It has seemed proper to his Honor the Mayor, that the City Council should take some appropriate action in the matter referred to in this communication. I have no doubt that the opinion of the Common Council will agree with that of his Honor. Mr. Norcross, although not at any time a member of this branch of the City Government, was for three years a prominent member of the Board of Aldermen, for one year chairman of that board, for one year Mayor of the City of Boston, and at different times held other prominent and responsible offices in the City Government. Since his entrance upon public and city affairs, he has been a most conspicuous citizen. It is not my purpose, and perhaps it would not be my place, in presenting to this meeting the subject, to consider which you have been called together, to attempt any eulogy upon the character of Mr. Norcross. Your action to-day will indicate the respect and esteem in which you, as representing in part the present City Government of Boston, and as successors in the affairs in which he took so eminent and honorable a part, still hold his memory. What is the pleasure of the Council?

Mr. Parkman, of Ward 9—It seems a little sad, Mr. President, that the first meeting of the Common Council, after this long vacation, should be called to take recognition of the death of one of our fellow citizens. But it has been the custom of previous city governments to take official recognition of the deaths of those who have been called to serve as the head of the municipality of Boston. The services of Mr. Norcross to the city are so well known to every member present that it is hardly necessary for me to go into any extended enumeration of them. As you have well said, sir, he was for three years a member of the Board of Aldermen, one of which years he was their chairman. Before being elected an Alderman he had held various positions of trust upon boards connected with the government of this municipality. In 1867 Mr. Norcross was Mayor of this city, and made a record in that position which showed the great courage of his convictions, and his fidelity to what he believed

to be the best interests of this city. His long and successful career, reaching as it has, only slightly beyond the allotted period of man, has been marked by the gradual growth and increase of the city, and has shown the steady development of his character. I have never had the pleasure of being privately acquainted with the ex-Mayor, but have known those with whom he was intimately connected, and have known his character in private and public. There will be many charitable societies in the city which will miss him at their meetings; many persons will miss his charitable hand extended to them. As a citizen he has always been willing to come forward and assist in any of the great public works which have been started since he was Mayor, and has led in all good works to the improvement of an honored name. I desire, therefore, Mr. President, to offer the following resolutions:—

Resolved,—That we receive with unfeigned regret, the announcement of the death of Otis Norcross, formerly Mayor of the City of Boston. That in this event we recognize the loss to the city of one of its most valued citizens, whose singularly pure life and whose unflinching honesty, ability, and undeviating devotion to the interests of the city, reflected the greatest honor alike upon himself and upon the municipality into whose service he was so often called.

Resolved,—That a committee of six be appointed (of which the President of this Council shall be one) to represent this body at the funeral of the deceased.

Mr. Morse, of Ward 9—Mr. President, this scene and this occasion remind me of a like meeting of this Council at the beginning of this year, when the sad announcement was made to us by his Honor the Mayor, that John P. Healy, the faithful and efficient law officer of the city, was dead! And it is meet when a man like Otis Norcross, who has served the city with distinction in so many capacities, and who has filled so ably

the chair of Mayor, passes away, that we should be called together to take appropriate action upon his death.

Mr. President, the city has met with no common loss. Few men can be found in this vast community who have served her so ably, so disinterestedly, and so entirely from a sense of duty as did Mr. Norcross. Boston born and Boston bred, and from his birth to his death a resident of Boston, few there are who cherished her institutions more dearly, or who did more to advance her material and moral welfare, than he. The public journals of the day have already informed us of his birth, his business, and his public career. That these were alike successful and honorable admits of no doubt. Upon every thing his name was connected with, his character was stamped. Whatever he undertook, he applied the whole force of his powerful mind to do well. As one of Boston's merchants he was careful, sagacious, painstaking, polite, firm, and most honorable and most successful. In whatever public office he served, he conducted the trust as he did his own private affairs. He loved truth for the sake of truth; he loved honesty for the sake of honesty. He was a man of principle for principle's sake, and once his mind made up, no considerations could swerve him from what he regarded right.

He never sought office or courted public favor. When he accepted office it was from a sense of duty and at the earnest solicitation of his friends. He acted upon his own judgment and not upon that of others. He had a mind of his own and a superabundance of good, honest, common sense. No influence could move him or impel him to do any act which had not the approval of his own conscience.

"He would not have flattered Neptune for his trident,
Or Jove for his power to thunder."

He would have told the truth as he knew it, and acted upon his convictions of right as he understood them, whether it pleased or displeased his most ardent friends. His administration while Mayor of

Boston was marked for the purely business principles of its management. He was at the head of a great corporation, and all his official acts were for the benefit of *all* the corporators. He was absolutely independent in his office; he had no friends to favor, no enemies to punish; those who supported him in devotion to the city's interest were his friends; those who had selfish or partisan interests to serve were his enemies.

No man will be more missed than he in the large charities our citizens so much delight to cherish. The Young Men's Christian Union, the Old Men's Home, the Old Women's Home, and many other kindred institutions, have lost a generous benefactor, and a warm-hearted and zealous friend. To some, perhaps, he may have seemed austere and rigid, but to those who had the pleasure of his nearer acquaintance, such an idea will sound preposterous. He was a kind-hearted and genial friend, full of love for the young and ever ready with wholesome advice. I shall never forget my conversation with him on the eve of my entrance into the city's service in another branch of the government. Every word he spoke to me was the word of a sage; every sentence was replete with honesty and integrity; every thought breathed patriotism and devotion to the public trust imposed upon me. His private life, like his public career, was singularly pure, and devoted to his family. Without wishing to intrude upon the privacy of their grief, I may be permitted to say, that a loving husband and father has passed from this earthly realm, whose loss is not theirs alone, but that of the whole city he so often and faithfully served, and so ardently loved. Mr. President, I second the motion for the adoption of the resolutions offered by my colleague.

The resolutions were ordered to a second reading, read a second time, and put upon their passage.

Mr. Whitmore, of Ward 12—Mr. President, I feel impelled to make one suggestion in regard to the public career of the late Mayor Norcross, which I have not noticed as being mentioned by the gentlemen who have

already spoken. Possibly his friends declined to dwell upon it, from what I think is a mistaken scrupulousness. It is an undeniable and well remembered fact that Mr. Norcross served as Mayor but one term; that he did not receive the contemporaneous endorsement which now we feel was his due. But now I think we should dwell for a moment upon the reasons for this temporary failure, and draw from it two lessons.

So far as I can judge, he was a man of an antique mould. He was perhaps a man living a little too late. He reminds me of the men who lived in Boston fifty to eighty years ago, and who are now looked upon as no longer models for us, because of their faithful adherence to the principle that economy in the expenditure of public money is a duty which every man owes to his constituents. Mr. Norcross was conspicuous for that virtue, and that, of course, was the reason for his temporary lack of popularity. It did not arise from any meanness or niggardliness of his own disposition, for no man could have held the position he did as a merchant without enjoying broad and enlightened views in regard to the expenditure of money. It was not because he was not willing to give his own time to every call made upon him, or to spend his own money with liberality, but it was because of his views upon the expenditure of public money, that he failed to receive the favor of those who wished to put their hands into the public purse. I feel, to-day, that it is a more glorious record for a man to have been Mayor of Boston for one year, and to have failed of a re-election because he was so economical in the expenditure of public money, than to have been elected for a score of years if he was not economical in such expenditures.

But the lesson I would draw from this fact is, that we have met to-day to do honor to the memory of Mayor Norcross because we feel that he was right. We point to him as an example of what should be the typical Mayor of Boston, one that would protect the public interest. Beyond that, the idea which has occurred to me from looking over his career is this: That, though he was disappointed, perhaps, in not receiving the cordial endorsement he looked for, he did not withdraw his services

from the community, and was willing to serve his city where he could. This recalls to my mind, that, as lately as 1875, he was willing and ready to be named as one of the Commissioners who undertook the thankless duty of revising the city charter. It was in that connection I first met him, upon an occasion when the citizens were called together to hear the proposed new charter explained, and I found that Mr. Norcross had spent a great deal of time in correcting, remodelling, and reframing our charter. I think we can safely say, to-day, that in two respects Mr. Norcross was a model for us; first, in his economy in the expenditure of public money; second, in the cheerfulness which he showed to serve his fellow-citizens without feeling depressed or offended at any temporary disagreement between him and the majority of the voters.

The resolutions were passed by a unanimous rising vote.

The President appointed Messrs. Parkman of Ward 9, Morse of Ward 9, Brown of Ward 23, Huntress of Ward 11, and Fitzpatrick of Ward 8, upon the committee to attend the funeral.

Mr. Morse, of Ward 9, offered an order—That the Board of Police Commissioners be instructed to cause the flags on City Hall to be placed at half-mast on the day of the funeral of ex-Mayor Norcross. Passed.

Severally sent up.

Adjourned on motion of Mr. Morse of Ward 9.

The Board of Aldermen met at 12 M., Alderman Stebbins, Chairman, presiding.

A message from the Mayor announcing the death of ex-Mayor Otis Norcross was received from the Common Council, with resolutions in relation thereto. The resolutions were passed in concurrence by a unanimous rising vote.

An order came up to cause the flags on City Hall to be placed at half-mast on the day of the funeral of ex-Mayor Norcross. Passed in concurrence.

On motion of Alderman Hersey, the Chairman, and Aldermen Hersey, Slade, and Hart were appointed a committee to represent this board at the funeral.

Adjourned.



MEMORIAL SERVICE

AT THE

Boston Young Men's Christian Union,

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1882.



MEMORIAL SERVICE.



SPECIAL service was held at the rooms of the Boston Young Men's Christian Union, in Boylston Street, on Sunday evening, November 5, 1882, in memory of Mr. Norcross, who was for many years a life member of the Union, and the Treasurer of its Board of Trustees. Mr. William H. Baldwin, President of the Union, in opening the services spoke as follows:—

FRIENDS, we have met here this evening in memory of a dear friend, a friend of us all, a friend of this institution, a friend, I may say, of all the citizens of this good city. We have met here that we may pass the evening in thinking of him whose seventy-first birthday anniversary occurred last Thursday, November 2, and we have invited some of our friends to speak to the young and to others of the life and character of Otis Norcross, a Boston boy, born here, and brought up here.

If our friends had time to trace him from his early boyhood, through boyhood, and youth, and early manhood, as a boy at home, as a boy at school, as a young man entering business, as a young merchant, as a citizen,

in his public position through life here, as Mayor of the city,—if they had time to trace him and to speak of him in all those relations, we should all have a lesson for each of us to consider. I can only say this—for it is not for me to take the valuable time of this evening—this institution has lost a dear friend.

Otis Norcross as one of our Board of Trustees, as a life member, as a friend of this Union, was an active friend. I can see him now coming into this building along towards evening—a favorite time of his for doing so—coming towards my office with a bright smile upon his face, and it was always with a pleasant word or some little joke. He would say, “How are the boys, and how is the Union?” If the young men of Boston knew of the many kind words he has said here in regard to the importance of this work, in regard to institutions that shall look after the young men as they come to this city, that shall care for the young men of Boston, I am sure they would have a lesson they would never forget. I should be very glad to take the young men of this institution, one by one, and pour into their minds and hearts the lessons his life has given to them and to us all.

Mr. Norcross was a worshiper at the West Church for many years. The young men of the Union remember that within two years we met here to commemorate another member of the Union who worshiped in that church, Mr. Eaton, who by his munificent bequest put the Union into a sound financial condition. I will now ask Dr. Bartol, minister of that church, to speak to us.

DR. BARTOL said:—

Mr. President, Brethren, and Sisters, whose silence in the seats is as expressive as can be any words from the platform, I suppose the memory and memorial of the glorified dead is not so much for their sake as for ours; for no praise of virtue, of truth, though in marble or bronze, is virtue's proper recompense. Virtue, indeed, is its own reward; for every act and every word of it increases and strengthens it, as the iron loads the magnet, and as proper exercise strengthens the limbs and members of the human frame.

Any eulogy of the man, regarded as adding to the fame or blessedness of that man in whose name we meet to-night, I should consider as an insult and a disrespect; but it is good for us to remember, to commemorate, to celebrate the worth which has dwelt among us, and shone so brightly, and it is in this view, simply and alone, for the sake of the young in this institution, that I am willing to appear and to speak of Otis Norcross.

When the Bible wishes to put a mark on a man, to single him out from his kind, to emphasize him, you will remember it calls him a just man; and I have to say this of Otis Norcross, that he was eminently a just man. You may have seen—certainly you who are familiar with mechanical operations and the building of houses have seen—in the carpenter's hands, a tool, not very large, called a spirit level, made of wood, glass, mercury, air, used to get the exact level of every beam and window, the little bubble that floats so lightly on the quicksilver pointing surely to the far horizon, and with its right angle giving a plumb-line to the centre of the earth, and the zenith in the skies. Otis Norcross had in his possession, and used, day by day, all his life long, a spirit level, not made of wood, and glass, and quicksilver, and a bubble of air, but of the intention to do right, and to be right in all his ways, as sure and more exact than any instrument that could be made of earthly material. He was a singularly honorable, fair-minded man. You speak of the level head to praise a man for shrewdness and sagacity; it was not only his intellect, but his conscience, his moral sense and sentiment that was perfectly level. And he carried this into all his affairs. Being engaged in political life, which almost uniformly, as certainly as the hidden bit of iron sways the needle in the compass, gives a bias to a candidate for office, he preserved the same impartial veracity and sincerity in all his words and ways. Indeed I will say, there was always, to my mind, in his walk and deportment something that was not exactly Yankee—shall I dare to say not exactly American?—but Roman and Greek, reminding one of the examples of Roman and Greek virtue. He was in public life a sort of Coriolanus, as the great poet Shakespeare has drawn him, unwilling to

stoop and perfectly refusing to go wrong and seek the "sweet voices" and votes of the multitude. It was impossible for him to do that; he was no lover of popularity, though he was a humane lover of mankind, and he paid the price which every man in this country must pay for neglecting to sue and pay aught to what we call the majority of votes.

I spoke of Coriolanus; he reminds me more of Aristides. I do not wish to be pedantic or learned, but simply true in saying this. I hope all you young men have, and you ought all to have, a copy of that wonderful work, Plutarch's Lives. I suppose it is in your library. Turn to the volume which contains the story of Aristides, and you may read how he, when requested by an Athenian citizen to write "Aristides" on a shell, with which he was about to vote to ostracize—you know the meaning of that word, ostron, a shell,—to ostracize, that is, to exile him, to banish him from the city, Aristides asked why he did that; "Because," answered the citizen, "I am tired of hearing him called the just." I am seriously afraid Plutarch has not put it all down. I guess that citizen had a job! I think that citizen must have had a very dull axe to grind. I am afraid that citizen suffered from the justice of Aristides; for the justice of Aristides was not simply that of the man who pays his debts, but it required and constrained everybody who was related with public affairs to be just also.

I have heard of a man who dwelt in Boston, I won't say whether it was in Boston proper, or in South Boston, or in East Boston, who was sent for by Mr. Norcross, when he was Mayor, to give an account of some extraordinary expense; I believe it was for carriage hire. Some twenty dollars it took to get him to his home. He resented the call of Mr. Norcross, the Mayor, who didn't wish a man to put his hand into the public treasury and pull out fifteen extra dollars; Mr. Norcross would have been much more willing if the man had plundered from *his* pocket. And when the next election of Mayor came, that man, jubilant, exultant, rejoicing, came with a great armful of votes to distribute against Mr. Norcross. In a community depending on the popular vote, though it is an honor to be Mayor of the city of Boston, the election of no man

since the foundation of the city to that office, was a greater honor than the defeat of Mr. Norcross was an honor to him.

He was a just man, but not only just. Simple equity, giving as much as I take, being square at the grocer's and the butcher's and the baker's, paying my taxes punctually for what I get lawfully in return, is after all not a very shining ground for a man's character. We are scarcely more than unprofitable servants if we do no more than that. Mr. Norcross was a good man, a kind man, a benevolent man, a Christian man, who put his goodness not into professions, (I never heard him make a profession of any sort, religious or political, in my life,) but put his goodness into his deeds.

Now, the nature of goodness is to give more than we receive, as God gives more than He receives and never reclaims a benefit of His bestowing; as the sun shines for ages, lavishing his beams on all the planets in the solar system, filling the sky with light, to store it up in all animate existence, never withdrawing one single one of those myriads of rays of light and heat. Plant, animal and man, under God we are creations of the sun. The very coal under ground that is heating this building is only so much consolidated sun; as the English speak of their consols, so everything in this world is a consol of the sun.

As the spring pours out its sweet waters and takes not back a single drop, as the mountain pours down the streams and sacrifices itself in the effort to make the soil on the plains, and the level territory, and the fertile banks of the rivers, on which grow the mighty elms and the corn fields, so goodness gives, is ever giving, is nothing but gift, as God is nothing but giver and gift; and that was Mr. Norcross.

I suppose some of the speakers to-night will refer to the various institutions, not only this but other institutions, which have felt his beneficent hand. Indeed, I suppose no man has lived in Boston who was more zealously engaged in beneficent enterprises and societies of all kinds,—in business, in civil life, in religion, in philanthropy, than Mr. Norcross. That is to say—he was a good man. Then he had a large mental horizon; a man may

be pretty good and be very small-minded. He was large-minded; he was a man of free and bold thought on all matters, political and ecclesiastical, and during his long illness I got a great deal of consolation from him, having long been, Mr. President, myself a poor heretic, though my heresy and that of others like me seems becoming with amazing rapidity pretty orthodox in these days.

I got a great deal of comfort from Mr. Norcross; and, if you will permit me, though it is so familiar and perhaps trivial a mention, I had the other day a message from the spiritual world. I do not belong to the Spiritualists, but I have a great respect for them. I think there must be a great deal of honesty in a body which numbers millions of people, perhaps the greatest sect numerically at present in the United States. I am not a Spiritualist; but, Mr. President, I would a great deal rather be a Spiritualist than a Sadducee, who don't believe there is any Spirit, Holy or other, on earth or in heaven, but that we are all the children of matter, all tarred with that stick, and going down into that grave.

Well, a distinguished literary lady, whose name it would not be proper to mention, said lately to me, "I came to see you—no, I was sent to you, I was sent to you by Theodore Parker, who wished me to tell you what a comfort you had been to Otis Norcross." I only wish, Mr. President, that the message had come to me directly; for then, as we stop, you know, a telegraph boy to send back an answer to a despatch, I should have very much wanted to inform Otis Norcross what a very great comfort he had been to me! The only light I can get about the incident is that no doubt Mr. Norcross was as free, as bold, as radical, as unprejudiced, as spiritual, as moral, in his style of thinking as Theodore Parker himself—a free-minded man.

Well, Sir, I have occupied as much time as I ought. What made Otis Norcross? How was there such a man—a man who never went through a college, had no title of Master of Arts, Doctor of Laws, Doctor of Divinity, or anything else which universities bestow, and yet he distinguished himself by his intellectual and moral influences far beyond the vast majority of the

graduates of our American colleges. I can only say, God made him. Let it be said once more—of him—“An honest man’s the noblest work of God.”

I say, he was free in his thought. He was not surprised by any progress or theological advance. I am not ecclesiastically connected in any association, institute or conference of what is called the Unitarian body. So I may say without boasting, either for myself or for you, that Unitarianism to-day, that little, despised minority, as Theodore Parker himself said, does make after all some very good saints. Roman Catholicism makes them, the Episcopal Church makes them, the Baptist, the Methodist, the Orthodox Church makes them. The Unitarian denomination makes them. All hail to the ecclesiastical manufactories that can strive and struggle together to see which will turn out the best and the most.

Let us honor Mr. Norcross as a free-thinker, whose freedom went into no license, whose freedom was connected with the strictest obedience to law, with the worship of God and the service of man. Let us honor him who in sickness, in pain, in long physical disability, and facing of death, year after year, and day after day, was devoid of fear. Says Mr. Emerson, “If I quake, what matter what I quake at.” He quaked at nothing, for I verily believe that the Scripture was justified and verified in him, that perfect love—*perfect love*—casteth out fear, even of death.

Mr. Baldwin next introduced Mr. HENRY P. KIDDER, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, who said:—

The tidings of the death of our friend Mr. Norcross came to me without previous knowledge that he was dangerously ill; although I had known, what I believe he realized, that the attacks from which he had for some time suffered, would probably soon take him from us. But except in a gradual reduction of cares, as his strength diminished, I could see no change in his ever cheerful appearance, which came, no doubt, from a calm resignation and quiet trust that all would be well.

When I received Mr. Baldwin’s letter, announcing that Mr. Norcross had passed on, I felt that the public had met a great loss; and not only his

family, but all who had been associated with him so long and so pleasantly, a personal bereavement. He was not an ordinary man; and, while I am sure, could he speak to us now, it would be to say, I ask no words of eulogy, having simply tried to do my duty as I understood it, yet it seemed not unwise to devote this evening to a few words of remembrance, hoping that such an example might serve as an inspiration to others who are present with us at this commemoration service, and may, possibly, fail to appreciate the source and cause of so much influence.

Let me assure such, if any there be, that it came not by any sudden growth, but was a structure, the foundations of which were deep and broad, laid in early life, and added to day by day. He soon saw that "to crown the narrow span of life with wise designs and virtuous deeds," was the duty of every good citizen, and, while attentive to his business, found also time for public interests, in aiding others less fortunate, in the education of the young, and throwing around them good influences, realizing, as I have heard him say, "In that lies the safety of our institutions." He estimated highly the opportunity of the clergy and of the newspapers for good.

He was not a politician in the accepted sense of the word; and, while holding clear and distinct views on public policy, which he was always ready to advocate and work for, he regarded with respect and toleration those who differed with him. This feeling was reciprocated when he was a candidate for the office of chief magistrate of the city, persons of all parties voting for him. You all know how honorably and satisfactorily he filled the place. He cared more for public good than party success.

He had a holy horror and contempt for men who believe the public *need* them in office. I think it was by his motion that, at one of the Citizens' Conventions, it was voted, that "No member of the Convention will accept a nomination for any office."

To unswerving integrity and conscientious devotion to any service he undertook, he brought also a rare degree of good common sense, which never forsook him, so that his guidance and counsel were often sought and welcomed in public enterprises, for which, when his judgment

commended, his money and time were freely given. You all know his rare modesty, and that it was impossible to persuade him to address a large audience; but the influence of his counsel was often felt where his voice was not heard.

As a business man he was most exemplary—one of whom it could be truly said, “His word is as good as his bond.” I am happy to say, that, through much experience, I am persuaded this is not so rare a virtue among business men as some believe. The success attending his business life was owing to his intelligent application to the special line he had chosen, resisting temptation to turn aside for greater gain, through greater risks, which has been so often the cause of pecuniary disappointment and failure.

We shall not again look upon his genial face, nor listen to his kind and wise words; but we can benefit by his example, remembering that honesty, truthfulness, integrity, unselfishness, will surely command the love and respect of our fellow citizens.

Many of us are on the western slope of life, and soon will pass the line of time; and what can we ask more than that when we have passed on, the memory of us may be as bright and clear and spotless as ours of Otis Norcross? And, what is required of us to ensure this, but simply “that we do justly,” “that we love mercy,” and “walk humbly before God.”

Mr. Baldwin then read the following letter from Mr. JEROME JONES:—

Brookline, November 4, 1882.

DEAR MR. BALDWIN,

I cannot trust myself to put in oral form the tribute I would gladly pay the memory of the true man in whose remembrance your special service is held.

Twenty-nine years as boy and man, I was intimately associated with him, to gain each year deeper respect for his absolute integrity, his remarkable fidelity, his perfect truthfulness, and his large-heartedness.

Firm and independent in action, he always observed genuine courtesy to employees and associates, as well as to those with whom he dealt on equal terms.

His aims and standards were high, exacting of those subordinate to him, conformity to principles combining the highest virtues, with the soundest business wisdom. A surplus in goods received was as rigidly reported and paid for, as a shortage claimed. There was but one rule, exact accuracy.

His instructions were, "Never misrepresent the goods." Employees were enjoined to observe firmness, with politeness to all,—the latter as scrupulously to the humblest customer as to the largest. Another motto was, "Never make haste to be rich; make slow and steady gains if you would prosper."

No business firm of whom he bought, and none to whom he sold, ever doubted his honesty, or found him other than strictly just.

When called upon to pass upon the differences that had arisen between other merchants, as he frequently was, absolute impartiality characterized his every act. He would not suffer one party to communicate anything relating to the controversy in the absence of the other. His justice to employees was never limited to the strict letter of the bond, if he felt that more was due from himself.

A model man has gone from us. We can no more profit by his direct precepts, or the gentle influence of his presence, but his well rounded life has not lost its power to aid us to follow the right; a perpetual standard of excellence, no worthier mission of the Young Men's Christian Union than to induce the young men coming into responsible business life to emulate his example.

Sincerely yours,

JEROME JONES.

Mr. WILLIAM H. BALDWIN,

President, B. Y. M. C. U.

MR. SAMUEL WELLS was next introduced, and said:—

“ Whatever you undertake to do, do it with all your might.” This seems to me to have been one of the principles of action adopted by our revered friend to govern his performance of the duties of life.

I doubt if he ever distinctly, or consciously to himself, laid down this principle or put it into words, or if he ever considered the subject of how he should perform any duty as one open to question. It was rather a natural quality of his mind than a calculation as to the results of such a course, and he could not have neglected a duty if he had tried to do so; his whole soul would have revolted at the thought. The moment any proposed action became a duty, he at once, without a thought of whether or not it would affect his personal comfort, his popularity, or his purse, put all his powers of mind and action into the work, looking forward only to see how it could be successfully accomplished.

When I first had occasion to observe his methods of action in business affairs, I was surprised at his ready apprehension of all the details of the work, and his patient watchfulness in seeing that they were all carried out. It seemed as if even the minutest part had had his careful attention, and had been fully considered in its relation to the whole. Everyone associated with him could feel that when his hand was at the wheel, not a movement of the compass, nor the slightest variation in the wind would escape his notice.

While, however, his thoroughness led him to such a complete knowledge of every detail, he did not lose sight of the great purpose of the work in hand, and his ability for generalization was not in the least impaired by his attention to the less important particulars.

This combination of qualities is very rare. The majority of young men do not appreciate the importance of knowing and attending to all the details of their work. They are too apt to feel a certain degree of contempt for such small things, as if they were too petty to occupy their

thoughts; they conceive that any one can look after the small things, and that it is the part of great minds to take general views and decide on broad questions of policy. It is this error on the part of young men that leads them to be constantly seeking for higher positions than they are competent to fill.

This error is not altogether unnatural. It seems a very easy matter to decide whether this or that article of goods should be bought, or whether this or that policy in the carrying on or development of business should be adopted. A young man feels so sure of knowing what he would do if he were in a certain position, that he has not the slightest doubt of his capacity.

It certainly looks as if it required only a little common sense to be able to sit behind a desk, to occasionally ring an electric bell, and to say yes or no to the various questions presented by subordinates. But here is the error: to perform such a duty, to superintend the work of others, to know their characteristics, and obtain the best results from them, to direct even a portion of the machinery of a business enterprise, requires a long course of attention to, and study of, minute details, so that when a question is presented, its bearing and effect on all these details and their ramifications is instantly comprehended.

A difference of one per cent. on the total amount of business done often means a profit or a loss, and the managers can only make it a profit by a careful attention to every part of the business.

Young men do not always appreciate this. In entering upon a business career they are set to work on some part of the business that they deem beneath their abilities. They do this work,—well enough, perhaps,—but without having their hearts in it; and when it is done, they idly pass their leisure moments waiting until time shall bring about their promotion. These men soon find their level, and the highest point they reach is far below the goal set by their glowing anticipations at the outstart. On the other hand, the young man who does whatever he is required to do to the utmost of his ability, and occupies every spare

moment in the study of the details of the business he is connected with, comparing and classifying these details until he has them thoroughly digested in his mind so that he can form generalizations from them, is sure to rise eventually to the higher business levels, and to those positions of control which form the object of his ambition.

It cannot be denied, however, that there is such a fault as too great attention to minutiae, although this is a fault much less common. Occasionally we find one whose time is so much occupied with small matters that he has no opportunity to take broad views of his affairs. Sometimes, and perhaps often, this is owing to a want of mental power to view things in their proper relative proportions.

While Mr. Norcross had this remarkable faculty of comprehending and looking after details, he had an almost instinctive knowledge of the true prospective of the different parts of his work. This combination of qualities contributed largely to his success in his undertakings both public and private, and rendered his services so desirable and so valuable to the city, and to the various corporations with which he was connected.

They led naturally and inevitably to another prominent quality, which no one who knew him could have failed to observe, and that was his untiring industry. He allowed nothing but illness to interfere in the least with his application to his work. He, of course, fully appreciated the value of time and the importance of punctuality; usually among the first to keep an appointment, he was good natured to those who were later, being willing to suppose that they had good reasons for their tardiness.

Young men can find few examples in life and thought so worthy of imitation as that presented by Otis Norcross.

It is not his material prosperity that we would present as a reason for imitating his methods—that is subordinate to the possession of his mental and moral qualities. But, whoever can attain to his clearness of thought, his calm and direct methods of accomplishing his purpose, his freedom from selfish motives and from views of personal ambition, will

find far greater satisfaction in life and action than can possibly exist in the feverish, absorbing contests for wealth and place that occupy the thoughts of so many of our young men.

Whatever you undertake to do, do it with all your might. Do not stop to think whether it will give you credit or blame; do not think of your own comfort, but go to work, learn all there is to be known about it. Omit nothing. See that every part of it is in good hands and well done, and when success rewards your efforts, you will find your greatest satisfaction in the thought that you have done it with all your might.







HOME FOR AGED MEN.

[FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT, JANUARY, 1883.]



WE CLOSE another year of the life of our Home under a deep sense of the loss which we have sustained in the death of our greatly trusted President, the late Hon. Otis Norcross. Full of years and full of service as he was, we could ill spare him from this as from so many other places which shall know him no more. His name will always be honorably associated with this excellent charity.

At a meeting of the Directors, held on September 8th, the following resolves were unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That in the death of our President, the Hon. Otis Norcross, our Home for Aged Men has lost a most capable and devoted head, and our management one who was as diligent to share our work as he was wise, prudent and tender to guide our deliberations. Mr. Norcross needs no testimonial words in the City which he has so nobly governed and served; in the many religious and charitable organizations with which he has been actively connected; amongst the

fellowships of enterprising and honorable merchants, the company of open-handed and warm-hearted givers, the neighborhoods and households of our every-day life. He was a citizen whom we all are proud and glad to claim as our own, from the day of his birth to that death-day which even at the close of the threescore and ten years, seems to us to have come all too soon.

Resolved, That the Directors request their Clerk to spread upon his records and transmit to the family of the deceased this expression of their high regard for their late President and associate.

HOME FOR AGED WOMEN.

[FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT, JANUARY, 1883.]

IN Board of Managers, Oct. 19, 1882, the President, Mr. Henry B. Rogers, addressed the Board in the following words:—

As we come together once more in this room we cannot fail to recall the fact that since our last meeting this Association has sustained a serious loss by the decease of our late associate, the Hon. Otis Norcross. Indeed, this whole community have felt that they also have met with a serious loss, and have willingly and generously paid to his memory their tribute of gratitude and respect. And, in my judgment, he conspicuously deserved it; for, in the first place, he was a good man; his private life was pure, an example to all, and in these days of peculiar temptation and trial in many directions, this is an inestimable public blessing. And, in the next place, all his actions as a public man were in harmony with his personal character.

Called to high office, and engaged in many important public and private trusts and responsibilities during a long life, he was found to be conscientious, wise, diligent, and entirely reliable in them all,—a good and faithful public servant, respected and honored wherever known.

In 1870 he was induced to become a Manager of this Institution, for he had sympathy with the wants of the aged and desolate as well as for those of the public at large. He did not refuse honors, but he loved usefulness. He took a deep interest in its inmates. He gave his time largely to the promotion of its welfare. For nine years—from January, 1873, to January, 1882—he was the Chairman of its Executive Committee, in charge, under the Board of Managers, of the general conduct of the House.

His careful and minute investigations into all matters that came before him, his caution, sagacity, and good sense, made his services in behalf of the Institution of great value; and his departure fills us with genuine sorrow and regret. It would seem proper, therefore, that we should place on our records at this time some just expression of our feelings on this occasion.

The following resolutions, submitted by the President, were then unanimously adopted:—

Resolved, That the Managers of the Home for Aged Women desire to record their deep regret and sorrow at the loss they have sustained by the decease of their late associate on this Board, the late Hon. Otis Norcross, and their high appreciation of his character and services.

Elected Mayor of the city and called to assume numerous important public trusts and responsibilities—in all of which he gained credit for integrity, fidelity, and capacity,—he was willing to give much of his time and thoughts to the more humble, but not less important, cares and duties of this charitable association; and for many years, as a member and as chairman of the Executive Committee, by the dignity and courtesy of his presence, by his untiring zeal, his careful consideration of all matters coming before him, his prudence, good sense, and wise

suggestions, he made himself honored and respected by his fellow-members, and greatly promoted the welfare and success of this Institution.

Resolved, That the regard and sympathy of the members of this Board be respectfully tendered to the widow and family of the deceased in their sudden and great bereavement, and that the Secretary be requested to transmit to them a copy of these resolutions.

BOSTON YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN UNION.

[FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT, APRIL, 1883.]

HON. OTIS NORCROSS, for many years a member of the Board of Trustees, Treasurer of the Permanent Fund, and a Life Member of the Boston Young Men's Christian Union, died in Boston, Sept. 5, 1882.

At a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Union, held Sept. 26, 1882, a committee was appointed to prepare resolutions, together with an account of Mr. Norcross' connection with the Union with which he had been so actively interested for many years as a member of the Board of Trustees and a Life Member, and to present the same to the Board of Trustees at their next meeting.

The committee, thus appointed, submitted the following account and resolutions, which were accepted by the Trustees, and recorded, a copy being sent to Mrs. Norcross and family:—

Hon. Otis Norcross became an annual member of the Union about thirty years ago, and a Life Member in May, 1872.

After the Board of Government in 1870 decided to establish a Permanent Fund for the benefit of the Union, and to place the custody

of that fund in the hands of a Board of Trustees, they turned to Mr. Norcross as one eminently calculated to inspire public confidence; and he was chosen the treasurer of this fund.

For a few years, this fund grew steadily larger; and the demands of the Union rapidly outgrew the accommodations then existing. Mr. Norcross watched this growth with care and interest, and was one of the first to perceive the necessity of a larger building, which should be especially adapted to the growing needs, and which should be owned by the Union.

The first meeting held by friends of the Union to discuss the desirability of such a building was on Feb. 24, 1874, where he not only gave his words of advice and encouragement, but joined with those who early contributed money toward its erection.

During the process of building, he took an active interest, devoting much time and attention to the details of the plans and various disbursements connected with carrying them out.

After the completion of the building, he was a frequent visitor, and often examined with interest the various departments of the Union, watching with much pleasure the increasing membership and influence of the Union, and, among other friends, he was extremely gratified to find, much sooner than had been expected, further room was required for the various purposes of the institution.

When the need of further enlargement was made known to the public last April, Mr. Norcross was especially gratified with the readiness with which the friends of the Union responded to the call made by the Trustees for this purpose, and with the fact that the full amount was subscribed in a few weeks, he himself being one of the liberal donors.

It is a source of great pleasure to the Trustees to think that much of his time of the last six months of his life he gave to the supervision of preparations for this extension of the Union Building, and we deeply regret that his death occurred before the completion of this work in which he was so much interested.

One of the oldest, best, and most useful of the friends of the Union has left us; and we desire to place upon record some expression, however inadequate, of our grief at this great loss. We therefore recommend the adoption of the following resolutions:—

Resolved, That, in the death of Otis Norcross, we have lost a beloved friend and associate, to whom we are under a special debt of lasting gratitude for his unswerving devotion to the welfare and success of this institution, and his deep interest in its progress and growth.

Resolved, That the death of Otis Norcross comes to each of us, and to all actively interested in the work of the Boston Young Men's Christian Union, as a personal bereavement.

Resolved, That we shall ever cherish and honor his name, and that we would hold up to the members of the Union and to young men everywhere his noble character and purity of life, urging upon them to emulate his uprightness, his integrity in all the affairs of every-day life, so marked whether in matters of small moment or in the large and important trusts and duties imposed upon him.

Resolved, That we tender to his bereaved family our warmest sympathies for their great loss, and feel that, when he left this his earthly home, he was greeted with the blessed welcome, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

FIRE RELIEF FUND.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Summer Street Fire Relief Fund, October 17, 1882, the following resolutions were adopted:—

Whereas, we have learned with profound sorrow of the decease of our late friend and associate member, Honorable Otis Norcross, who for nearly ten years served as the custodian of the Fire Relief Fund, it is hereby

Resolved, That in the death of Mr. Norcross this committee has lost a conspicuous and valued member, and this community one of its best citizens, whose well-known purity of life and integrity of character, combined with rare business ability and sagacity, and his readiness to bear his full share of the public burdens, afford an example of faithful stewardship and of uncompromising devotion to principle and duty which will cause his memory to be long cherished among us.

Resolved, That a copy of this preamble and resolution be sent by the Secretary to the family of our late treasurer, and entered upon the records of this meeting.

EARTHEN AND GLASS-WARE DEALERS.

At a meeting of the dealers in Earthen and Glass-ware, held at the rooms of the Boston Board of Trade, on Thursday, September 7, 1882, the following resolutions were adopted:—

Whereas, it has pleased the Almighty in His Providence to remove by death our late friend Otis Norcross ; therefore,

Resolved, That in the death of Mr. Norcross we have lost one of our noblest associates and wisest counsellors ; one who possessed in an eminent degree all the elements of a high-minded, honorable and successful merchant.

That by his sound judgment, strict integrity, and industrious life, he leaves a record that all may safely emulate, whether regarded as a friend, citizen, merchant, or public official.

That while we cannot expect to mitigate their sorrows, we tender to the widow and family of the deceased our heartfelt sympathy in that great bereavement which has taken from them a kind and affectionate husband and father.

That in token of our respect we will close our places of business on Friday, the 8th inst., from 11 to 2 o'clock, and attend the funeral of the deceased.

That a copy of these resolutions be sent to his family and to his successors in business.

NEW ENGLAND TRUST COMPANY.

AT the annual meeting of the stockholders of the New England Trust Company, held January 17, 1883, the following preamble and vote were adopted:—

Whereas, Since the last annual meeting of this Corporation, Hon. Otis Norcross, a Director of the Company for many years, and for several its President, has deceased,

Voted, That the Stockholders desire to place upon the records their sense of the valuable services rendered by Mr. Norcross to the Corporation as a Director and President, and their regret at the great loss which this Company, with the community, has sustained by his death.

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS.

[FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT, DECEMBER, 1882.]

MR. OTIS NORCROSS deserves from this corporation a particular tribute of gratitude and respect. At every stage of its progress he has been most valuable in his advice and energetic in his assistance. The interest which he took in everything to which he gave his attention, and the thoroughness with which he did everything which he undertook, were never better shown than in his connection with this institution. His experience in municipal affairs and the weight which his opinion always had in Boston were at different times of great importance to the

Trustees. Of the many public enterprises with which this judicious, energetic, and public-spirited citizen was connected, there are few to which he proved so useful, and none by which his loss will be more severely felt, or where his place will be more difficult to supply.

REVERE HOUSE.

At the annual meeting of the Proprietors of the Revere House, held March 13, 1883, the following resolution and vote offered by the Hon. Frederic W. Lincoln, were adopted :—

Whereas, We are reminded at this, our annual meeting, of the decease, during the past year, of the Hon. Otis Norcross, one of our most esteemed and respected members, therefore,

Resolved, That although time may have assuaged to a limited extent our grief at his departure from the scenes of earth, yet we cannot fail on this occasion to honor his memory, and to place upon our records our testimony to his public spirit and private worth, and to the fidelity with which he discharged by eminent service the many trusts which this community placed in his hands. Naturally possessing a strong personality of character, it was yet combined with the more gentle traits which foster and cement friendship. Fond of labor and patient with details, he was thoroughly acquainted with all matters which required his supervision. Sagacity and industrious habits made him a successful man of affairs, while the philanthropic and charitable institutions with which he was connected gave evidence of his interest in the amelioration of the sufferings of his less-favored fellow-men. One of the founders of this corporation, and a Director from the first, his interest in its concerns never abated, his presence on the more informal occasions which have made part of our history was always welcome, and his absence from them will long be deplored. By his decease his native city was deprived of one of its best citizens and the members of this organization of one of their most valued associates.

Voted, That a copy of the foregoing Resolve be transmitted by the Clerk to the family of Mr. Norcross, with the assurance of our sympathy in the loss which they were called upon to sustain by his death.

FRANKLIN SAVINGS BANK.

At the quarterly meeting of the Trustees of the Franklin Savings Bank of the City of Boston, October 31, 1882, the following preamble and resolution was adopted :—

The Trustees of the Franklin Savings Bank, at their meeting this morning, are reminded of the absence of two of their number, the Hon. Otis Norcross, and Charles E. Jenkins, Esq., both of whom by the decrees of a wise Providence have been removed from the scene of their earthly labors.

Mr. Norcross' connection with the institution embraces the whole period of its corporate existence until his death. He was one of the original members, serving on its Investment Committee, giving at times almost daily attention to its affairs, until failing health compelled him to relinquish the personal duties of the trust, but never abating his interest in its success and prosperity. The resolutions already upon our records, passed unanimously by the Board at the time of his resignation, bear testimony to the value of his services, and our sense of the loss that was sustained by the Bank in his withdrawal from its concerns.

Mr. Jenkins was also one of our original Trustees, discharging to the full measure, the appropriate duties belonging to that official position. Prompt at the meetings of the Board, attentive to committee business, and uniformly evincing a warm interest in its affairs.

The death of both of these associates we deplore, not only on account of the institution which they faithfully served, but on account of the genial character which ever distinguished our personal relations with them :—

Resolved, That the Secretary be requested to transmit to the families of our late members a letter of condolence, expressing our sincere sympathy in the bereavement which they have been called upon to sustain, with the assurance of our tender respect for the memory of those they mourn.

The following resolutions, referred to above, were adopted at the annual meeting of the corporation, January 3, 1881, after the reading of a letter from Mr. Norcross resigning his position upon the Board of Trustees :—

Resolved, That we sympathize with Mr. Norcross in the cause which has led to his resignation, and trust that after a temporary retirement from active duty he may again, with health renewed, resume his position in our body, and give to our interests his influence and experience.

Resolved, That the thanks of this corporation are due, and are hereby rendered to him, for all his labors in its behalf, and especially for the services he rendered during that crisis in our affairs, when, in common with other institutions of a similar character, we were passing through a season of pecuniary embarrassment, which called for the exercise of sound judgment and unremitting industry to sustain its financial credit, reputation, and good name.

BUNKER HILL MONUMENT ASSOCIATION.

At the annual meeting of the Bunker Hill Monument Association, held June 18, 1883, the President, the Honorable Robert C. Winthrop, in his annual address, said :—

And now, gentlemen, we are called on to remember, at this anniversary meeting, those of our number who have died during the past year.

Indeed, we could not forget them if we would. Though happily there are but two names lost to our living roll since it was last made up, yet those two, I need hardly remind you, are the names of men who had not only rendered devoted services to our Association, but who had in every way entitled themselves to our warm regard and respect.

The Hon. Otis Norcross died on the 5th of September, in the seventy-first year of his age. He had been one of our Directors for fifteen years, during six of which he was a member of the Standing Committee. No one of the Board was more attentive, more vigilant, or more practically useful. He brought to our service the sterling qualities which marked his whole character and career. He was a man of great intelligence, of remarkable firmness, and of the highest integrity, never weary in well-doing, and one whose counsel and co-operation, in all the concerns of this Association and of the community in which he lived, were as highly valued as they were cheerfully and generously afforded. I knew him intimately in the days of the Civil War, when I was engaged, as Chairman of the Overseers of the Poor, in the reorganization of that Board, of which he was the Treasurer; and I can thus bear personal testimony to his wisdom, his diligence, and his unswerving fidelity. But this was only one of the relations which he sustained for so many years to the charitable institutions of our city. He was, indeed, more or less prominently associated with almost all of them. Meantime, as Chairman of the Board of Aldermen, as Mayor of Boston for at least one year, and as a member of the Executive Council of the State, his name was honorably associated with important political offices and affairs, and it will not soon be forgotten as that of an honest man, a valuable citizen, and a good and faithful public servant.

The Honorable Frederic W. Lincoln offered the following resolution and vote, and they were adopted:—

In assembling at our annual meeting, the members of the Bunker Hill Monument Association are reminded of the death during the year of our esteemed associate, the Hon. Otis Norcross, long identified with its interests and an efficient officer of its government.

Resolved, That in Mr. Norcross' career were exemplified the best characteristics of a good citizen, a staunch patriot, a sagacious business man and warm friend. He gave to the public in different positions a service without selfishness, and to the many charitable institutions with which he was connected, a personal devotion of time and means, creditable to himself, and of great value to the community in which he lived. Active in our own organization, he discharged with cheerful alacrity and promptness all official duty placed in his charge, and full of the spirit which created the association and fosters its continuance, his name and memory will ever be cherished as one of the most honored on our roll of members.

Voted, That the above resolution be entered upon our records, and a copy of the same transmitted to the family of Mr. Norcross, with the assurance of our heartfelt sympathy in the bereavement they were called upon to sustain by his decease.



NEWSPAPER ARTICLES.



BOSTON JOURNAL.



THE announcement of the death of Hon. Otis Norcross will be received with deep regret by his fellow citizens. The sad event took place at his residence, No. 9 Commonwealth Avenue, Mr. Norcross dying of heart disease at 10.20 last evening. For some few years past he has been an invalid, the seat of the trouble being the kidneys, with attendant complications, terminating in heart disease. A few weeks since he visited Saratoga, and returned to the city sooner than he expected on account of his health.

The death of Mr. Norcross is a public loss, for few of his contemporaries are more largely identified with personal and charitable trusts. It was characteristic of him to hold a laboring oar wherever he was interested. He will be missed in varied circles, for, in the fulfillment of what he regarded as a duty, he never spared himself. He was never content to be an ornamental member of any association. He was impelled by a sense of duty to thoroughly understand all the details of each trust which he accepted. In the performance of his official duties he was faithful and exacting, for with him the acceptance of responsibility carried with it a determination to perform the attendant duties with the same fidelity that he would give to his personal affairs.

Mr. Norcross, who was born in Boston, November 2nd, 1811, commenced his business career when he was about fourteen years of age, entering the store of his father when the firm of Otis Norcross & Co., crockery dealers, which was founded in 1810, moved into South Market Street, which was in the year 1826. He was admitted a member of the firm in 1833, and retired from active business February 1st, 1867, making forty-one years of business life in one store. The well-known house of Messrs. Jones, McDuffee & Stratton succeeded the old house of Otis Norcross & Co., and the deceased has always retained his counting-room with his successors.

For many years Mr. Norcross was one of the hardest working merchants in this city. He toiled more hours each day than even his naturally wiry constitution could endure, and before he retired from business he was obliged to seek repose by a foreign tour. Though frequently solicited to accept office, he declined till he was induced to act as a member of the School Committee from old Ward 5, Mr. Norcross then being a resident of McLean Street. The commencement of the war induced him to participate more actively in public affairs, for he was zealous in the cause. In the earlier days of the war Mr. Norcross contributed \$5,000 to the cause, which he placed in the hands of Governor Andrew.

In 1862, 1863, and 1864, he was a member of the Board of Aldermen, holding the position of Chairman in 1864. He declined a renomination. In 1867 Mr. Norcross was Mayor of the City of Boston. His administration was beneficial to the city, for it was one conducted upon purely business principles. He vetoed the building of an insane asylum at Winthrop, and he changed bad methods of management which had long existed. He looked after the interests of the taxpayers by the adoption of rigid economy. It was a matter of indifference to him who was affected by a change if he deemed it advisable to make it. While he made the city his debtor by his independence he naturally created enemies. When he was renominated,

he was the first Mayor who refused to accept the honor a second time unless he could be informed who his associates were to be in the Board of Aldermen. This was regarded as dictation by many Republicans in the Convention, but Mr. Norcross claimed that as he was to occupy a position where every act could be nullified by an unfriendly board, it was proper that he should know in advance whether he was to be supported or opposed in his theory of government. The gentlemen nominated to the board were acceptable, but he was defeated by Dr. Shurtleff, lacking only a few hundred votes of a re-election. It was a happy release to Mr. Norcross, who gladly sought relief from the severe strain of private business and official duties. His salary as Mayor he gave to charitable institutions.

In 1869 Mr. Norcross was a member of the Governor's Council, where he exercised a large influence. In 1872 he was appointed an Inspector of the State Prison by Governor Washburn, and he was also one of the commissioners appointed to issue the fire bonds under a special act of the Legislature, which act was subsequently declared unconstitutional. He refused an appointment as Harbor Commissioner. He was the second President of the New England Trust Company, which office he relinquished January 1st, 1879, and he held the position of Treasurer of the Fire Fund, raised at the time of the great fire. He was one of the Trustees and Treasurer of the Board of the Young Men's Christian Union, and has been connected with the Franklin Savings Bank and many other financial institutions. He was a valued member of the Board of Trustees of the Fine Art Museum. He acted for a term of years as Treasurer of the Board of Overseers of the Poor, the reorganization of which board was largely owing to his zeal and perseverance. The late Hon. David Sears presented to him a silver salver for his efficient services in promoting the Searston Charter House, a trust in charge of the board. He was also a member of the Commission to revise the City charter, and was Vice-President of the Board of Trade for 1867-69. Mr. Norcross has been an active

member of many public committees, and notably of those which gave to the city the statue of Edward Everett, and to the State the statue of John A. Andrew.

It will be admitted from a mere glance at this imperfect record of his trusts, that he was a faithful steward and a public-spirited man. Official honors had no attraction to him, but he did not avoid opportunities to labor on behalf of the public when he felt that he could be useful. In addition to all the work which the above-named offices imply, the care of his own large property, and the private trusts which he held, taxed him to an extent which we feel shortened his days upon earth. If he had been more mindful of himself and less ready to work for others, he would have prolonged his stay here. But his mission was to do good in his way, and though remonstrated with for devoting himself so assiduously to such duties, he never made but one reply, and that was that he did not seek such burdens, but that he could not shirk them.

Mr. Norcross was never ostentatious in his gifts, but he was a liberal giver and a good friend to many. He was active in promoting the Old Men's Home, and the Old Women's Home, with both of which he was officially connected. During the Centennial Exhibition he sent three worthy mechanics to Philadelphia that they might profit by the instruction to be gleaned from the great exhibition. He promoted the interests of many by timely help, and he was the judicious counsellor of hundreds.

The removal of a man like this from the community is indeed to be deplored. It is not, perhaps, remarkable that one so upright and downright had opponents, but we do not believe he leaves behind one who doubted the integrity of his motives and the purity of every impulse.

Mr. Norcross married a daughter of the late George Lane, who survives him, and he leaves a daughter and two sons.

BOSTON TRANSCRIPT.

IN the decease of Hon. Otis Norcross, Boston parts with a prominent citizen, whose influence was felt as a conserving and beneficent force both in private and public affairs. Mr. Norcross was an excellent illustration of the enterprising trader, scrupulously exact and just in all his dealings; one who achieved success, not by overreaching and chicanery, but as the result of sagacious combinations and intelligent forecast. His word was as good as his bond, and that is very high praise for any man in times like the present. He will be greatly missed in many charitable circles, where his active efforts, careful and conscientious supervision, as well as philanthropic deeds, will long be treasured as a precious remembrance. His connection with municipal matters, and management of the executive power of the city for a time, may almost be said to have constituted an era in local administration to which no small number of citizens frequently look back as a red-letter period in our history as a municipality. The same rigid integrity displayed by him in private transactions was carried into public relations whenever he was called by the community to discharge any trust. In office, he would not swerve a hair from what he regarded the right course, to gain popularity. He had backbone, and never sought official position, though he willingly incurred responsibility in obedience to an unmistakable popular request. He was one of those cautious, calm, decided individuals, to whom all within the radius of their power instinctively look for counsel and guidance. His death will be much regretted in varied departments of business and philanthropic activity. But he leaves behind an example of public and private worth which will long continue to work for good in this city, in whose progress and prosperity he evinced deep interest throughout his busy life.

BOSTON GLOBE.

HON. OTIS NORCROSS died at his residence, 9 Commonwealth Avenue, at 10.20 o'clock last evening. Ex-Mayor Otis Norcross was born in Fleet Street, November 2, 1811. He was educated in the Grammar and High Schools of Boston. * * * Mr. Norcross was the first Boston merchant to open up the trade with the West, and, perhaps, did more than any one East to open up that great field of trade and commerce. He was Mayor for one year, and his administration was characterized by strict economy and a close observance of the rules laid down for the government of city affairs. As a politician he was very pronounced in his views, a Webster Whig, and a most consistent temperance man. As a business man he was a credit and an ornament to his native city. Socially he was reserved, and at times was cold.

THE COMMONWEALTH.

OTIS NORCROSS, ex-Mayor of Boston, ex-Councillor of the State, and a citizen otherwise of renown and influence, died Tuesday night, at the age of nearly seventy-one. He was a native of the city, and was brought up with his father in the crockery business on South Market Street, in one of the stores first occupied for business by him. He was a man of great energy and sagacity, and both as a business man, and since, accumulated property rapidly.

Mr. Norcross was a "clean-cut" man in all respects. He impressed one with his decision, independence, and self-reliance, in every word. With a quick humor and much *bonhomie*, he was always dignified in their expression, as in all other utterances. He made an admirable Mayor, though his positiveness and individuality alienated some persons. We have no doubt he was honestly elected for a second term in December, 1867, but cheated out of his honors by North-end politicians on the night of the election. Originally a Webster Whig, he became a strong Republican, and at the outbreak of the war was foremost with money and generous words. It would be a long story to tell all he had at stake in our various charitable and industrial movements, but he never was without a deep interest in all that concerned his native city. Tall and commanding in personal attributes, he looked as he was, a typical Bostonian, well poised, intelligent, a lover of art and literature, at home with his friends, and not indisposed to help upward all deserving of favor.

BOSTON STAR.

HON. OTIS NORCROSS, one of the most esteemed and honored citizens in our community, died at his residence, No. 9 Commonwealth Avenue, on Tuesday evening, Sept. 5. Mr. Norcross was born in Boston, Nov. 2, 1811; where he always resided and paid taxes. He was educated in Boston schools and at the age of fourteen years entered his father's store, which was styled Otis Norcross & Co. After his father's death and at the age of twenty-one, he took charge of the business until he was elected Mayor in 1867, when he retired from business with ample means. * * * In politics he was formerly an old Daniel Webster Whig, but in later years was a Republican. Deceased was a thorough gentleman in every act and word, and a temperance man in the broadest sense.

BOSTON HERALD.

HON. OTIS NORCROSS died last evening, at his residence, No. 9 Commonwealth Avenue. Mr. Norcross, although by no means a politician, was a firm believer in the duties of citizenship. It is a noteworthy fact that he not only always resided here, but paid his taxes in Boston. He was kind and exceedingly charitable, although so unostentatious that few of his good deeds were known beyond the circle of his beneficiaries. During Governor Andrew's term of office he headed a charitable subscription with \$5,000, on condition that his name should not be mentioned therewith. Mr. Norcross was among the pioneer importers of earthenware in this city. * * * As a business man, Mr. Norcross enjoyed an enviable reputation; he was very enterprising, and his firm was always in the front rank. He was the pioneer in the western trade, and it is related of him that, in 1845, he travelled by stage and canal far into the western country, and discovered the great possibilities awaiting eastern enterprise. On his return he sent out salesmen, and the result was that the western and southern fields were thoroughly canvassed by this enterprising house in advance of all competitors. It was said of him that he would always report an "over" as promptly as a "short," and he was generally regarded by the trade as an honorable competitor. His advice to his employés was, "Be firm but polite," and the principles which he laid down enabled his house, in the hands of his successors, to increase its business, year by year, so that the firm to-day ranks among the foremost in the country. It is said that no crockery importer was better or more favorably known in Staffordshire and the other great earthenware markets. Toward his employés he was rigid in his requirements, but also liberal in compensation, and his clerks were not infrequently agreeably surprised by liberal presents. No one will ever know the extent of Mr. Norcross's charity, and

he will be missed by a long list of pensioners, in whom he took a more than friendly interest. Though not a total abstainer, Mr. Norcross believed in temperance in its broadest sense. While in public life, he declined innumerable invitations to social and festive occasions, because of his convictions in this respect. Unlike the politicians of to-day there stands against Mr. Norcross's name on the books in City Hall not a single entry charged for dinners, champagne or cigars.

He was very affable and polite ; tender in his manner toward children, but strong in his convictions and firm in his dealings with men. He was possessed of keen perception and sound judgment, and was never afraid to assert his opinions when he deemed it necessary. He was retiring in disposition, though he rigidly observed the rules of society. He entertained a supreme contempt for the modern style of politics, and when solicited to allow the use of his name a third time as the candidate for Mayor, with every assurance of election, he firmly declined, and has since taken no part in municipal affairs. He, with William Gray, came forward nobly after the great Boston fire, and by generous donations and valuable counsel rendered inestimable services to his fellow-citizens.



EXTRACT

FROM THE

MEMORIAL HISTORY OF BOSTON.

PRINTED BY PERMISSION OF THE PUBLISHERS, JAMES R. OSGOOD & CO.



FROM THE CHAPTER

BOSTON UNDER THE MAYORS.



IN 1864 an important and much-needed improvement was made in the municipal organization for the relief of the poor. Under the provisions of the first City Charter, one person was elected in each ward of the city to be an Overseer of the Poor, and the persons thus chosen constituted the Board of Overseers, with all the powers formerly exercised by the Town Board. In the administration of their department they claimed the right to spend money to any extent, and in any manner they saw fit. Grocers, coal dealers, and others got elected on the board for the sole purpose of furnishing, either directly or indirectly, the articles for which the city paid. Mayor Quincy attempted, in 1824, to obtain additional legislation by which the doings of the board would be brought under the supervision of the City Council, but he failed; and his successors who afterward renewed the attempt failed, for the reason that the people could not be made to understand why the persons elected by them to the Board of Overseers were not as trustworthy as those elected to the City Council.

The change effected in 1864 was due more, perhaps, to Alderman Norcross, than to any other person. As the chairman of a committee which investigated the subject in 1862, he exposed the loose and irresponsible methods of the old board so effectually that the City Council petitioned the General Court for authority to appoint the overseers and to audit their accounts. An act giving that authority was passed April 2, 1864, and the new board, composed of honest and capable men, was organized July 4 following, with Robert C. Winthrop as chairman.

* * * * *

In the charter election of December, 1866, Otis Norcross the Republican candidate was successful, receiving nine hundred more votes than his Democratic opponent, Dr. Nathaniel B. Shurtleff. Mr. Norcross held the office of Mayor only one year. His failure to receive the customary re-election for a second term was due, perhaps, to a certain stiffness of virtue, which in political life at least, seldom receives the reward it merits. His administration is chiefly to be commended for what it did *not* do. It fell upon a time when some very sensible people were congratulating the country on the blessing of being in debt; and when municipal aid was sought and often granted for the promotion of private enterprises. A great number of projects, involving the expenditure of millions of dollars, were under consideration when Mr. Norcross took office; and had he not been a man of considerable firmness, one who had an intelligent idea of the scope and purpose of municipal government, and old-fashioned notions concerning municipal indebtedness, the city would have been committed to some enterprises of very doubtful expediency. Among other measures which claimed the attention of the government was one for the improvement of the flats on the northerly shore of South Boston, extending from Fort Point Channel to Castle Island. The improvement was intended partly for the benefit of the harbor, by deepening the ship channel and increasing the movement of the water therein, so

as to prevent it from shoaling, and partly for the direct benefit of commerce, by providing additional facilities for the delivery at deep water of freight from the West. It was proposed that the city should enter into a contract with the Commonwealth to fill these flats, build docks, streets, sewers, and bridges, and reimburse itself by the sale of the property to corporations and individuals. It was a magnificent scheme, but the Mayor did not believe that the city ought to undertake to carry it out alone. He endeavored, and successfully, to secure the co-operation of all the parties interested—the State, the city, and the railroad corporations which desired additional terminal facilities. Had the city undertaken to do the whole work, it would have been called upon to spend an enormous amount of money, and the property would, probably, have been thrown upon the market, before it could be utilized so as to cover the cost of the improvement.

In his inaugural address the Mayor called attention to the unhealthy condition of the territory lying south of the Public Garden, caused by the want of suitable drainage. This territory was on the border of the Back Bay, and had been built upon before a grade was established, and when there was a right of drainage into a basin in which the water did not rise more than three feet above low water. The filling of the basin by the Commonwealth and the Water Power Company made it necessary to extend the sewers to points where the natural rise of the tide prevented the sewers from discharging their contents during the greater part of the day. The drainage of the whole territory lying west of Washington Street, between the Public Garden and the Roxbury line, was injuriously affected by the Back Bay improvement; but it was only within the district lying between Boylston Street and Dover Street, which had been built upon many years before any scheme for filling the adjoining flats had been seriously considered, that the injury was of a character to call for immediate action. The householders in that locality thought that the city should bear all the expense of providing suitable drainage, but the city authorities took the ground that the estates should be assessed

for a portion of the benefit which would accrue from raising the grade of the territory. The subject had been discussed for some years, and with much bitterness. Mr. Norcross recommended an application to the Legislature for special authority to abate the nuisance and to recover a portion of the expense for so doing. His recommendation was adopted; and an act was passed during the session of 1867 giving the city authority to take that portion of the territory known as the Church Street District, raise the grade, and either reconvey the several estates to their former owners upon payment of certain expenses, or sell them to the highest bidder. The act contained provisions new to the legislation of the State; but it was drawn with great care by an eminent jurist, and it enabled the city to carry out a great sanitary improvement without hardship to the numerous individuals whose property was taken, and without large expense to the city.

In the following year the provisions of the act were extended to the territory known as the Suffolk Street District, thereby covering all the low territory lying between the Public Garden and Dover Street. The net cost to the city of carrying out these improvements amounted to \$2,558,745. Forty-seven acres of territory, occupied by one thousand two hundred and thirty buildings, and two thousand one hundred and fifty-five families, were included within the provisions of the legislative acts. The streets, alleys and backyards were raised to the grade of eighteen feet above mean low water; the cellars were raised to the grade of twelve feet; and the buildings were raised to correspond to the grade of the streets. It took four hundred and five thousand three hundred and four cubic yards of gravel, mostly brought from the country by steam power, to do the filling. The work was not entered upon until June, 1868, after Mr. Norcross had gone out of office; and it was not completed until 1872.

Near the close of the year 1867, the City Council passed orders approving certain plans for the erection of a new hospital for the insane, on a lot of land purchased for the purpose several years before

in the town of Winthrop. The hospital at South Boston, erected in 1839, and enlarged in 1846, was reported by the Directors for Public Institutions to be overcrowded at times, and to be lacking in many of the conveniences which medical experts deemed essential to the proper care of the insane. The Mayor, while recognizing the need of some improvements in the accommodations furnished to the city's patients, was strongly opposed to the erection of an hospital on the exposed headland at Winthrop, and was opposed to the erection, on any site, of a building projected on the magnificent plans which had received the approval of the City Council. He vetoed the orders, and saved the city from building and maintaining a very expensive institution, which it was clearly the duty of the State to provide, and which the State did provide some ten years later.

Among the notable events of this year was the annexation of the City of Roxbury to Boston. The subject had long been under consideration. Commissioners appointed by the governments of the two cities in 1866 to confer upon the subject, reported early in 1867 in favor of the project, and on June 1 the Legislature passed an act, to take effect upon its acceptance by a majority of the voters in the two cities, providing that all the territory then comprised within the limits of Roxbury, with the inhabitants and estates therein, should be annexed to and made a part of the city of Boston and the county of Suffolk, and should be subject to the same municipal regulations, obligations, and liabilities, and entitled to the same immunities in all respects as Boston. On the second Monday in September the inhabitants of the two cities voted to accept the act, and on the first Monday in January following, Roxbury became a part of Boston, constituting the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth wards.

Roxbury, at the time of its annexation, contained about thirty thousand inhabitants, and real and personal property valued for purposes of taxation at \$26,551,700. Most of the wealthy residents had their places of business in Boston; and the controlling argument for annexation in this case,

and in the case of other municipal corporations subsequently annexed, was that many men doing business in Boston were forced by its limited area to live outside of the city, and to lose the privilege of voting on questions of local government where they had the larger interest. Another argument in favor of the union, and one which had some influence, probably, was that the relations between the two municipalities had recently become much more intimate through the occupation of the territory reclaimed from the sea on both sides of the narrow neck of land which had formerly united them by only a very slender tie.



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